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SERIES OF OUTLINES :

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THEOLOGICAL ESSAYS

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS CONNECTED WITH
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND PRACTICE.

BY THE REV. W. T. WISHART.

*"The hour cometh and now is, when the true Worshipper
shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth."*

JOHN IV. 23.

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P R E F A C E.

THE sketches that are to enter into the following Volume, will contain sentiments different from those which the Author has held and expressed in former instances.— To those critics who consider that a man should never change an opinion, this will appear an unpardonable offence. To those who believe it to be the duty of the Christian to proceed forward, it may perhaps seem an evidence of candour and intellectual progress.

W. T. WISHART

St. John, N. B., September, 1846.

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THEOLOGICAL SKETCHES.

"THE hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth ; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."—John iv. 23.

"But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, now turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage ? Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years."—Gal. iv. 9—10.

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses ; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross ; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days, which are a shadow of things to come ; but the body is of Christ."—Colos. ii. 13—17.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

"*Speak unto the Children of Israel, that they go forward.*"—EXOD. XIV.—15.

THE circle of Doctrine has not varied much in these last three centuries. It continues substantially, what Calvin and the Reformers made it. This is a fact which the Orthodox so far from denying, regard as matter of praise. It was a rapid stride which conducted men from the Mummies of the old Faith, to the severe, yet elegant realities of Calvin's Institutes. It would seem that such things cannot happen often. After so rapid a movement, society appears to require to take breath for three hundred years. So good and great a deed has been done, that it considers that a very tolerable time may be devoted to singing its

praise. In this way it happens that men, so far from disputing that their system of opinions is identical with what it has long been, find in this fact an argument the more for the soundness and excellence of their creed. We do not differ from them here *in the whole extent*. A great movement deserves to be viewed on all sides. A system at once large and symmetrical, calls for a close and impartial analysis. That which has seemed to work well for a length of time, demands of us that we should pause, before we attempt to alter its form. The men and the doings of the Sixteenth Century, could not have been understood without a long and deep study of their peculiarities. But the real question with us is, must this last for ever? All men are agreed, that WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE possessed a mind, to which the history of the world presents nothing superior. But all men will *not* go in with the idea of those German enthusiasts, who tell us that there are deep abstract reasons why a mind of similar grasp should never again appear. The historical statement is plain; the philosophical conclusion is much more than doubtful. In conceding as much to the great Theologians of the Sixteenth Century, we surely concede enough. The admission is made, that mankind have beheld nothing greater in their department of mind. The conclusion is disallowed that therefore we are to presume that nothing similar or analogous can ever shew itself, and that men are bound for ever to stand gazing on the monuments which these have reared, instead of bestirring themselves to accomplish like laudable objects. The world decidedly sets too high a value upon passive wonder. The Bible would lead us to consider, that the man who does, is more estimable than the man who speaks. Human philosophy, or perhaps rather human practice, would seem to say that the reverse must be true. To stand and look back upon the Reformation—to exaggerate its

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good—to screen its evil, and to give forth the sentiment, that no similar era can ever be expected,—such are the symptoms by which it is held that a man evinces himself a true interpreter of the past—a worthy partisan of the Protestant Faith. Tried by the standard of the Bible, such symptoms wear an equivocal aspect. If they indicate a pious or poetical cast of mind, they indicate also a character, that is unable to take the shape of action. Judging from the canons of inspiration, that man exhibits the worthiest sympathy with what is good and great in the past, who studies its features in such a manner, as to endow them with new vitality, by the lofty and devoted deeds which a genuine love of virtue has prompted him to perform, before the men of his own day. It seems hard to pronounce when men will fairly escape from this strong fascination. The tokens of a healthier state of feeling, are faint and few. The main current sets backward. Society, with a loud and solemn voice, enjoins her members, if they would attain to just and deep views of Godliness, to revert to the men and events of the Sixteenth Century.—This is not precisely that lesson which Scripture would read us, when it invites us to “stand in the ways, and see and ask for the old paths.” *It* would seek to set us upon a better track. *It* would refer us to the fountain head.—*It* would teach us to copy from the original. *It* would give us to believe, that if there have been deeds of much significance in any past era, we shall best come at the faculty by which to emulate them, by drinking deep at that source, from which their doers derived their vigour. To build monuments to the departed worthies of the Church, is on the authority of Jesus, one symptom by which the Pharisee may be known. To walk in the footsteps of the just, and to prove along the tenor of a noiseless, yet notable career, that their spirit is not extinct, is a destiny which

few are willing to fulfil, but which proclaims loudly, in regard to him who fulfils it, that he has been with Jesus, *and to good purpose*. The inclination to gaze rather than to act, has produced this effect among others, Theology no longer occupies the centre. It is not the pivot on which the evolutions of society are performed. It was so until the Reformation. It continued to be so during a century after that event. Annalists are aware of the circumstance; but the true reason of it has escaped their notice. They have ascribed it to the art of Printing. In observing on the fact, that this art has put the materials of knowledge within the reach of a larger number, they consider that they assign a cause why Theology no longer reigns, with its ancient paramount influence. At the most, this is but a part of the problem. The major portion of the difficulty must find its solution elsewhere. The main reason is, Theology has not been true to itself. Men have allowed themselves to be too much paralysed by the deeds of a former era. They have lapsed gradually into the condition of tame worshippers of what after all is only human. They have indulged in wonder so long, that they have divested themselves of the power of action. They have moved so long within a given pale, that it has become to them a magic circle. They are positively unconscious of the fact, that it would be competent for them to go beyond the circle, without being guilty of treason against the Most High. They have looked so long into the eyes of the Reformers, that a fascination has come over them, so strong as to defy every influence that would seek to remove it.

And then this privileged system has been allowed to interweave itself with all institutions, political and social.—It has the ominous prestige of antiquity,—it has all the petty influences of ordinary life to support it. It appeals to the fine sentiments which the romantic associate with

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events long gone by. It appeals to emotions stronger and much more widely diffused, to the lust of the flesh, to the lust of the eye, to all that is politic, commercial, carnal, and common place, in our fallen nature. So then, Theology has ceased to be the arbiter of human life, not merely because the competition has been brisk, but because it has become absolutely and intrinsically weak; because it has ceased to grow; because it has connected itself with that which has been, rather than with that which is; because it has forsaken the stream of living waters, and year after year has persisted in being the copy of a copy,—here is the true reason why its right hand has forgot its cunning. Yet there are circumstances which might induce it to doubt the wisdom of the course which it has pursued. The tendency to false and pernicious opinions in regard to Scripture, which has characterised the two last centuries, might invite inquiry. The rise and progress of avowed scepticism within the same period, might well demand a search into the reasons. The indefinite tendency to profess without believing which marks and has marked a large section of society, might fairly induce the leaders of opinion to inquire, how it is that things have become thus popularized, why it is that matters which men once held to be pearls, are now so generally trodden under foot of swine. The freshness and vigour that Literature and Science have displayed, along each successive generation, as contrasted with the sterile and monotonous character of the Theology of these times, is another event that might have led men to ponder. Why are things confessedly terrene, thus instinct with life, why are other matters professing to be divine, thus maudlin, thus rickety, thus inane?

The matter has been presented in a very distinct form of late years. These views have received confirmation from quarters in which we may place much reliance.

These opinions have been reinforced by writers, who have looked at the question, not from the side of polemics, but of calm history and statistics. It is on this account that we hold their sentiments to be of peculiar weight. They have spread out before us the scene that occurred during the first fifty years after the reformation was announced. They have shown us that the features of this epoch, were strong and rapid movement. They have exhibited the work as spreading with velocity in every direction from the centre, from which it took its rise. It moves Southward, into Italy and Spain. It advances Eastward, into Hungary, Poland and the borders of Russia. It visits the Northern regions of Europe. It moves with similar rapidity in the direction of the West. Then its force seems exhausted. The energy which once propelled it onward, appears to have died out. A new tendency discovers itself. It wavers, it begins to recede, it comes back upon its centre; and this it does in so perceptible a manner, that the observer is almost as much struck by the swiftness of the retreat, as he was before by the suddenness of the advance. Those who have sketched this historical outline of events, have likewise ventured to speculate on their reasons. They have put the question—is there no cause for this remarkable procession of things? And is not the solution to be found say they, in the circumstance that the work was more limited in its character, than we are apt to consider it, that its force lay principally around its original centre, that there were not found men in other directions of sufficient stamina to become new centres of movement, and that the work collapsed or retreated, not because of some strange mysterious dispensation that could not have been averted, and that cannot now be explained; but because of the very intelligible fact, that Luther, Zuingli, Calvin and Knox, were possessed of *given*, and

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not of *indefinite* powers, that their successors were much inferior to them, and that an era sprung up consisting of men, more capable of admiring what had been, than of communicating a new impetus to events. The conclusions which such writers have gleaned from the page of history, may be as surely derived from an abstract view of the subject. What they report to us as the result of looking outward upon events, may be attained to by looking inward upon doctrines. Philosophy apart from observation, would assure us, that such results must grow out of the necessity of things,—no science, whether it be moral or material, whether it relate to mind or to matter, can long flourish without an occasional reversion to principle and nature. If there be no such occurrence, practice soon outruns theory, and men find themselves reduced to one of two courses—either they rotate round a limited number of truths, or wearied of this make fancy the expositor of science, and invent combinations that are grotesque, absurd, and pernicious. It has been the fate of several of the arts to remain in this condition during considerable periods; and the longer the career they have run in such directions, the more sterile has been their estate at the last. It is also matter of observation, that in proportion as they have continued in this declining state, in like degree has been the unwillingness shewn, to break in upon the long prescription of folly and weakness. It comes to be fatality at the last. Superstitious feelings put shackles upon the mind, and men estimate the prejudices to which they are clinging, by the amount of years or centuries through which they have lasted. They take the squares of the distances, and congratulate themselves that the amount is so large. On the other hand, each movement in advance is always to be measured from the moment that some one has ventured to question the right of the past to dictate to

the present. Some voice bidding men to consider the pit out of which they were digged, and the hole of the rock whence they were hewn, has always been the event that has ushered in a new and better era. If the trumpet is sounded distinctly and at the right time, opinion receives the shock that sends it onward. Men then begin to learn again, that the true interpretation of looking for the old paths, consists not in recurring to dogmas which have become obsolete in the using, but in ascending anew to the principles of eternal truth, and from them taking a fresh departure. If this invitation is well proclaimed, and duly carried forth into practice, a reform springs up in the hour in which it is given. Authority is discarded for a time. Old edifices are pulled down. Stumbling blocks are removed. Nature or Revelation, are once more studied in their own light. An infusion of new principles is poured into the cistern of human knowledge. A certain amount of false doctrine and practice is laid aside; fierce conflicts of mind take place; the activity becomes even more remarkable than the previous lethargy, and the era is memorable in the exact proportion of the time it has endured, the degree of intellect it has engaged, and the number and quality of the new speculations with which it has enriched itself. The best days of each science and art, date from such points. In the order of things, they can happen only from time to time. The call of necessity must be loudly and repeatedly uttered, before they can occur. They arrive at the best season when they happen, before men have had opportunity to repeat themselves more than enough—before they have had time to revolve round fixed points; until energy is quite extinct. The description which the Bible gives us of itself, will bear us out in the assertion, that it is the roll of a book which is intended to be gradually drawn out. The actual progress of society, corres-

ponds with the image. Men have been rolling it out from the first. The Bible, in its philosophy and in its letter, would also apprise us, that it is in the order of Providence that there should be resistance to this process. In one of those vistas, along which we are allowed to see the procedures of the spiritual world, Joshua the High Priest is presented to the notice, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. In other portions of the landscape, Michael and his angels are seen to fight with the devil and his angels. This is not an occasional event, but a fixed law. If not the very order of the day, it is certainly one of the most frequent of the episodes. It is this element that we have been attempting to subject to scrutiny. The struggles of opinion that began with the commencement of the Sixteenth Century, and lasted down to the death of Oliver Cromwell, may soberly be regarded as one of those hot conflicts between the powers of light and darkness.—The question at issue was, shall the roll be unfolded a little more? It was carried in the affirmative. What we complain of is, that men have been employed ever since in fighting the battle over again. Thus while they have been engaged in looking back at the beast, glorying in the wound which they consider it to have received, they have remained positively insensible to the very next fact recorded in the chronicles of the Kingdom of Light. Have they at all borne in mind the prediction that the deadly wound should be healed? Have they in any degree remembered that an image of the beast was to arise out of the earth, and that this personage too, was to perform great and evil exploits? Whilst they have stared, or triumphed, or slept, has not the enemy improved their very rejoicing in the past successes of the truth, so as to elude their notice, and bring about the very catastrophe, of whose advent they were so clearly warned? When they were feasting their

eyes with the writhings of one monster, they have permitted themselves to be enwrapped in the mortal folds of the other reptile, whose coming they were told to expect. In all the long chequered history of man's follies and crimes, there exists no stronger example of the insanity bred by false religion. Whilst they have been thinking their wonder holiness; whilst they have believed that to panegyryze virtue was to be virtuous, the book of fate interprets to us their doings. *It* gives us to understand that their conduct has been hypocrisy; for it allows us to see them like natural brute beasts, made to be taken and slain—caught in the snare which they were enjoined to avoid. Had they been following on to know the Lord, this could not have befallen them. What we contend for is, that the time must come for something better. The roll must be drawn out again. There is positive need that we should see farther into its folds. Everything around proclaims the crying necessity. The age of miracles has ceased in every sense of the term. If there be strength in any direction, it does not flow from the well of Bethlehem.

If we survey the Church in its Missionary capacity, we derive no evidence of power from any quarter. Sects are transported from one tropic to another, and this is the chief if not the only result. The heathen are made acquainted with our language, our dogmas, our distinctions, and our rancour. Even to charity it must seem doubtful if they learn more than this; for even charity must question whether more than this is sent them. A fair and accurate mind can descry in the efforts that are making in this department, little more than certain auxiliaries of war and commerce to widen the circle of British influence.—When any result is obtained, we suspect it is nothing more than this, that the civilized man imparts to the savage some portion of his energy and his vices. This is an ef-

fect, but it is not that which we profess to aim at. Certainly it is not that of which we have reason to be proud. When the reports that inform us of the transactions of these societies are stripped of those elements that are obviously melodramatic, we cannot see that the residue contains much that is decidedly from heaven. A clear-sighted man can scarcely allow himself to believe that good heaven is carried from one country, and produces its quickening influence in another. The heathen are made aware of the peculiar intonation of the church going bell. They learn in due time to understand the evolutions connected with the Seventh Day. They are probably impressed with a certain influence proceeding out of our ceremonies, be it good or bad. It is likely that they feel the impressions that buildings, music, and priestly decorations, are wont to convey. They acquire a slight knowledge of our language and customs. The more acute among them in some few instances, learn to apprehend our creed, our sects, and the usual sentiments that are connected with these,—points such as these might render it a question of some commercial moment to a British factory, how much they considered this influence to be worth in the way of advancing their own projects. It would hardly appear that they can bear to be tried by a higher standard. Yet on this field we see exhibited some of the most vigorous actings of the churches. Their most approved agents are often sent forth to these remoter regions. A fair portion of the ability, a large part of the enthusiasm, flows into these channels; if there is weakness here, it is the best that can be done. If men are not quickened here, there is reason to suspect that they are quickened nowhere. When we turn our attention to the aspect of things nearer to the centre, we cannot, in fairness, entertain feelings of a nature much more sanguine. There is nothing which denotes that religion

exerts any thing more than a humanizing influence. On all sides it enters into a calm *mariage de raison* with the world, and the contract is observed by both parties, apparently to their mutual satisfaction. It cannot be said that holiness is engendered, and it cannot be denied that much decency is fostered. If in the higher walks of life, vital godliness is hardly to be met with, men comfort themselves with the reflection that the avowed scepticism and open profligacy which once distinguished these classes, are as little to be found. Perhaps there has been no epoch in the history of the Church in which there has been more ill-placed contentment than in the present day. An angel from heaven would probably fail to persuade many among us, but that we are rich and increased with goods, and that we have need of nothing. This is because the fusion of church and world is so very complete. And yet those symptoms from which the spirit of the times is to be divined would point to an opposite conclusion. The all prevalent temper of self-gratulation, that marks every sect, would argue at least a lack of sincerity and depth. The uncommon facility with which every class and profession catches up the appearance of religion, would seem to say that religion must have parted with its terrors, and the offence of the cross must have ceased. The agreement that prevails throughout all Protestant bodies to look for the features of evil, not within themselves, but in the old house of Popery, would point to one of two conclusions—either that an unexampled amount of purity must belong to us, or that our corruptions are so great as to deprive us even of the faculty of suspecting their presence. The mercantile spirit, which in its worst forms pervades so considerable a portion of the thinking classes, is another fact that should give forth a distinct warning. The temper of the real Gospel is most unlike to this. It inculcates that men should

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seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness—that they should look every one upon the things of another—that they should not make haste to be rich—that they should deem it better to give than to receive—that they should walk by faith, and not by sight—that they should look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are unseen and eternal. These points are not the high abstractions, but the level places of Gospel ethics. Yet they are in grimmest contrast to the practices of that part of society which professes to receive the truth.

Eager competition in every branch of business, gives rise to exertions beyond the powers of the human frame. The most subtle and paltry devices are resorted to. Age and Sex are not spared. A pressure is laid upon females and children which exceeds anything that they endure at those stages of the social system when men are barbarians. The poor generally are oppressed with an amount of labour, and a smallness of compensation that render their condition worse than it was in those periods to which we point, as peculiarly dark and cruel. Means are employed to draw attention, to outwit rivals to force business, or to avoid just claims that indicate the presence and the excessive spread of cunning rapacity and fraud,—qualities quite as much at variance with true religion, as those ruder vices which have flourished at earlier periods of our progress.—All this obtains in the very centre of gospel regions, nay, these are the points at which it is the most prevailing. An aspect of society, containing within it so large an amount of real badness, and exhibiting itself on the very ground that is the most irrigated by that which calls itself Evangelical, is well fitted to give us pause, and to lead to reflections such as these. Can our principles be real and profound, can our practice be that which befits the truth when such poisonous plants have so rank a growth within our very

gardens? Would not a system of thinking and conduct, that were really honourable to God, be attended with the effect of chasing away these birds of night, these creatures of evil omen? A circumstance that as much as any other denotes our doctrine to be spurious or weak, is the great amount of extreme indigence. In the central places of those lands, which make it their boast that they possess the truth in its purest forms, every seventh man is a pauper; and this happens just at the spots where the most enormous wealth and luxury rear their tall and arrogant forms. The two extremes meet. They dwell in closest neighbourhood. They inhabit the same cities and parishes. They are brought into contiguity even closer than this. They meet in the same factories and work-shops. The master represents the one extreme, the artizan the other. We do not say should such things be. We say, is there in this even a remote correspondence with the spirit of the Bible—and what must be that mode of faith which looks on, which sanctions, which tolerates, or which censures in that soft strain, which virtually increases the disease? The prevalence of the vice of intemperance in Christian lands, is a noted fact, and one that is often adverted to. It obtains among all classes, and among the lower orders it may be said to be one of the most common features. It tells a plain and lamentable tale of ignorance, of sensuality, of poverty, and of a wounded spirit. The doctrine which suffers so large an amount of this vice to spring up within its neighbourhood, can scarcely be deep, pure, or sincerely held. The spirit of discontent and faction which is so strong among the working classes, and which exists in no small degree in the higher orders, may also be cited as one of many tokens that indicates the absence of true and undefiled religion. The rancour that breaks forth among sects, and very generally amongst those which ap-

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proximate the nearest, is a well known fact, is a hideous feature, and is one that speaks as loudly as any thing else, of the depressed character of our ordinary doctrine. The feeling, little less than universal, which attaches sovereign importance to external matters, to rites, ceremonies, and festivals, tells surely of general poverty and weakness, in regard to spiritual things. Certainly this would not be the prevailing temper were there distinct centres from which a deep piety projected its influence. But when the main body of society is completely enthralled by such feelings, when their whole interest attaches to things obviously carnal, when they rally or separate, advance or retire, with a strict regard to these points and to these alone, not only is there poison at the extremities, but there must be poison at the heart also. Apart from all other considerations, this state of public feeling, wherein much interest is evinced about visible religion, and scarcely any about that which is unseen, would appear to mark the outline of the image of the beast. The church was in a parallel position when the beast received its wound. There was then a similar concern in regard to the semblance, and a similar hollowness in regard to the realities of holiness. Other symptoms may be appealed to as evidences of the lukewarmness of which we have been speaking. Thus the character which is now pretty generally ascribed to the Clergy of all sects, that they say and do not, the other broad points of resemblance that exist between them and the Pharisees, the very modified amount of moral influence which they exert as a body, are all of them marks of a sterile period. Religion has never yet flourished in the vicinity of such symptoms. When the men who should give the tone to theology are secular in their feelings, and when the utmost that can be said of them is that they are not visibly worse than others, the wheels of the gospel are stopped. But the most

direct method whereby to canvass this question is to enter the house, and examine the state of the sacred vessels. The condition of the temple gives an exact idea of the situation of the House of Israel. To apply the measuring rod here, is to take the dimensions of the religion of the people. Now it is a fatal objection in the fore front of the subject that doctrine has not advanced. Apparently soon after the great movement in the sixteenth century, the idea was allowed to grow up that a system had been consolidated which was to experience no changes. It is wonderful to think how wide and prevalent has been this notion. Separated as Protestants are into so many tribes, most of them notwithstanding cherish this opinion. Hating each other they all pretend to reverence the reformation. Holding such dissimilar doctrines, each sect maintains that its creed is the exact transcript of the views of Luther, or Calvin. A reference to the sixteenth century is considered final by each; it as much forecloses the question as when a Civilian refers you to the Pandects, or a Musselman to the Koran. Surely this is creature worship in an eminent degree. This tendency to revert, not to the fountain head of knowledge, but to a given period in the annals of the church has only *seemed* to fix the doctrine. In reality it has not done so. It has set up a barrier to enquiry in one direction, but has not prevented the mind from running riot along other path-ways. It has probably hindered many a pious Christian from prosecuting his researches along channels that might have led to wholesome results. It has not hindered, but on the contrary has encouraged the sceptic, and the heresiarch, to pursue their licentious speculations. The fair trader has been repressed, the buccaneer and the pirate have been encouraged by this state of things. Since those who pretended to hold the orthodox creed were unwilling to extract from the bible, things new as

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well as things old ; others who made no such pretensions, showed themselves ready to minister to the love of novelty. In all this period, so monotonous as regards the developement of the bible, the unbeliever has been busily occupied in rearing his castles in the air. Throughout the whole of it, the innovator has been prosecuting inquiries that have conducted to Arminian, to Arian, to Pelagian, or to Socinian, results. Altho' progress has been denied to the church, they have not been able to debar it from changes. Altho' it has been forbidden to go forward along the straight path of knowledge, they have not prevented it from scattering on each side. If we should not be able to make one step in advance for a century to come, it still appears to be of enormous importance that we should lay down the position that we have the right to move forward. To allow the mind, whether directly, or by implication, to form the opinion that it is possible to stereotype and fence in the whole doctrine of the bible, is to compel it to fester on in ignorance, superstition, cringing servility, hypocrisy, unbelief, and vice of every sort. Now this idea has been inculcated for generations back, and even where it has not been openly taught, it has been not the less assumed. The systems of Arminius and Calvin consolidated in past centuries, have been allowed to come down to our times without much change. Adopted by governments soon after they were put forth, interlaced with civil institutions, identified with the structure of society, wrought in with the power and wealth of countries, interwoven with their habits and associations, decorated by the arts, emblazoned by the eloquence of each period, they are almost the only things that we have that have descended to us in their native form. They have been presented to men in such an aspect, as to force their regards, whether they

were spiritual, or carnal. To the one they addressed the argument that here they would find the mind of the spirit. To the other they were able to say that in supporting them they would advance their own interests, and would earn golden opinions from a majority of mankind. But for this double action, it is certain that they could not have stood so long without changes. In the period of their duration there have been men acute enough and probably pious enough to have perceived and to have exposed some of the sophistries, if the premium upon acquiescence had not been so enormous. As far back as the times of the commonwealth, there were distinct symptoms given of an ability to see further than our present institutions of religion. In respect both of doctrine and framework, opinions were put forth then that make our churches of the 19th century, appear unphilosophical and antiquated. There can be small doubt that such sentiments would have played a much more conspicuous part, had not the tide of influence ran in opposite directions. These views indeed, have never died out, but have been the rallying points of a considerable number of true hearted men, in every time since they were first proposed. It is principally because the Prince of this world under various aspects considered it to be for his advantage to give his influence to other tenets, that these have been suffered to unveil their beauties within spheres of such narrow dimensions. When we go close up to those modes of opinion which have controlled the Protestant world for so long a time, one of the first objections that presents itself is this—what right have they to give themselves out as plenary manifestoes of the whole doctrine of the Bible. This is a subtle question to deal with, because it is one in regard to which the advocates of these systems contrive to equivocate, and shift their ground. They reply that there

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is no canon in the list of their articles that confers a right to bring this charge. We concede this and yet raise the objection, that it is fair to try a system by the construction that is usually put upon it, and the manner in which it is habitually handled. The dead letter may furnish tools to partizans with which to effect their cunning projects. The friend of truth will estimate the plan according to the manner in which it is currently employed, and the ideas to which it generally gives birth. Now, viewed in this light, it cannot admit of a doubt, that these systems pass current among the mass of society as digests of all inspired truth, and partaking intimately of the character of the revelation which they profess to interpret. If this idea exists it must have a cause somewhere. If it be little less than universal, its cause must be broad and strong. If the thought be false and pernicious, as who shall deny it to be, how is it that it meets with toleration, acquiescence and support, in any quarter where there is mind enough to expose it. It is too little to alledge that there is no express canon that affirms it, why are there not express canons to contradict and show it up? But the thought grows up in a legitimate manner. It is rendered necessary by the conduct which is invariably pursued by the interested partizans of these systems. They bring all the power of old associations to bear upon the public mind; they rally round their standards, rank, wealth and numbers. They do all that in them lies to render sympathy with themselves the only pathway to success. They exact of their associates, not a spiritual consent to the vital truths of their plan, but a mechanical subscription to all its punctilios. They make it plain that whilst they will tolerate any amount of evil which does not argue, or doubt, or even think, they will endure no degree of piety which presumes to question and discriminate. In all controversies among themselves, they permit no refer-

ence to the word of God, but rigidly measure the objection by the letter and nicety of their own code. When such a line of action is pursued by men of talent holding the position of accredited guides, can it be expected that society in general should arrive at any other conclusion than that the systems which are guarded with such an extreme of jealousy must, like the image at Ephesus, have descended straight from Heaven. When this state of feeling is forced into notice, wily partizans may fly to their written documents, and declare that *they* do not allow it. Those who form their judgments from facts rather than from words, will understand how much value is to be awarded to the plea.

In soberest earnest the thought is as shallow and unreasonable, as it is hurtful. That the idea should receive any countenance that society should at an early period of its history give such an exposition of the book of life, as that the digest should be incapable of modifications or accessions, looks strange. That this notion should increase until it became the ordinary verdict of mankind, is one of those anomalies on which men will yet look back with wonder. The bible appears to the attentive student so dense, so closely packed, so peculiarly laconic, that while this is to him one of the chief difficulties of the study, it also becomes to him one eminent proof of its divine origin. But a society of men have discovered a method in which they can present its contents, within a space that does not form a tenth, or an hundredth part, of its volume. The Bible describes itself as a roll which is to be progressively opened out. But a Synod of men professing to be curators of the truth stand by and forbid the unrolling, because it would carry us beyond what was known in the sixteenth century. In every other science progression is admitted as a cardinal law—in this, which would appear

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to comprehend all knowledge, it is excluded on the authority of venerable names. In all other pursuits, men are in the habit of pausing to examine, of seeking to ascertain how far they have reached, of re-considering their previous inquiries, of remodelling their axioms and formularies, of rejecting certain old opinions, of inserting recent discoveries—in a word, of attempting to make the science keep pace with the times. In this department, which aspires to give the tone and impression to all other studies, sects vie with each other in the assertion that their doctrines have not varied for ages. In any other pursuit, men would suspect that there was something radically wrong in their system if they saw society escaping at every point, and having recourse to every means except that which they supplied. They would think so in politics, in jurisprudence, in medicine, or in agriculture. In this singular branch, such matters are either not perceived, or if they are, they induce no diminution of faith as to the excellence of the plan. The depravity of human nature is in the fault ; or it is because the plan has not been sufficiently carried forth. On this notion a little more ceremony, parade and agitation, are put into operation. Nothing ever tempts any considerable number of ecclesiastics to descend to the root of the evil, and to propose an examination that would lead to a recasting of the system. So peculiarly is this the case, that whilst we entertain no doubt that the incubus will disappear in time, we cannot hope that it will be taken off on any philosophic principle. It may crumble down, it may burst asunder in the midst of commotions that contemplate perhaps different ends. A general plague, a long war, or a succession of intestine discords, might remove it. But narrowness and bigotry, are too essentially elemental parts of its partizans to allow the hope, that the remedy will come from them, unless on the supposition that they should tor-

ment men into some paroxysm that might rid them of the evil and its abettors. When the Church shall escape from this pressure, it will perceive the false position in which it has stood. It will see the folly of pretending to fix that whose very essence it is to be untrammelled and free. It will see the sophism that there is in thinking to condense that which is already condensed, in a superhuman degree. It will perceive the pernicious effects that result from exacting from each man a plenary consent to a long list of canons. Its eyes will be opened to the bondage the hypocrisy and the unbelief that are the necessary results of the present state of things. These formularies are either too little or too much. If they are designed to represent the whole statements of the Bible, they are obviously much too brief. If they are merely designed as a means of coming at the point, whether a man has experienced the grace of God, they are evidently much too long. Convenience would seem to dictate, that when a body of men have arrived at a set of opinions which express their creed, and which they consider to be of importance, they should digest them into a system, and form themselves into a camp, with the ark in the centre. Experience informs us, that what seems agreeable to reason, turns out to be most baneful in its effects. The results are very different from what the pious founders of the scheme wished, or could have foreseen. That which was intended as a mere rallying point for a few men under peculiar circumstances—that which was meant as a thing to be revised, altered and augmented with perfect freedom, is turned aside to other ends. Like the serpent of brass which had been preserved as a mere memorial of a great event, and which the Jews at last worshipped, these formularies which we do well to treasure up as tokens of a vigorous thought and action in a past age, are converted into engines for enslaving the

mind of succeeding generations. This has happened in so great a degree, as to authorise us in raising the question, whether these evil effects are not in the essence of the thing. It appears more than probable that a religious code cannot be proposed to a community without involving these effects. If this be the case the church in time to come will be called upon to solve the problem, how such dangers are to be avoided, how system is to be come at without coercing the word of God, how regularity is to be attained to without the risk of licence, how men are to become the subjects of order without parting with the right to think.

Some of the sects that have branched off from the two leading Protestant bodies, have shown that they entertained some faint conceptions on this head. Instead of marking out their system with a strong and continuous outline, they have been contented to etch it out somewhat loosely. This affords a ground of hope. It holds out a promise that when the present dominant churches begin to give way, there are ideas abroad that will prevent such tyrannous institutions from being erected again. When we take another survey of those systems that have lasted so long, and lorded it so high, we are arrested by the following feature common to each of them, the minute attention which they bestow in order to prove that Scripture gives to men, the external frame-work of a religious commonwealth. Quite as much importance is attached by them to this department, as to the other province of doctrine. Thus past ages have imposed upon us, not merely their views in regard to things esoteric but in regard to exoteric also. A voice comes down to us from venerable antiquity commanding us not only what we are to believe; but still more, what outward aspect our churches are to assume. Of the two yokes this last appears by much the most difficult to be

borne. There is some show of reason in the assumption, that the lapse of years or of centuries, should produce little or no difference in regard to the light in which we view deep doctrines of vital importance. The statement that time and the necessary changes of society, should have as little influence upon the scaffolding, is one that few reasonable minds would be expected to announce or tolerate: yet the Protestant church has been forced to carry this burden ever since its commencement. When Scripture is brought in as evidence on the subject, few dogmas seem more unreasonable than this. *It*, to the unbiassed mind, looks as if it used every exertion to prevent the thought. It nowhere brings together an assemblage of ideas that any sane reader can pretend gives the shape, or model, of that for which men contend. Even when many passages are brought together, it seems very hard to force them to cohere into any one form. Revelation as if it anticipated the foolish controversies that were to spring up on this matter, would appear to have so expressed itself as to leave polemics without excuse. It is in the habit of speaking of those who obviously exercised the same functions, under different names, and of using these convertibly, as if to warn men from the vain and unprofitable topic. Still more, it shews us those whose functions were different, changing hands as occasion required. An apostle is seen making tents, deacons and persons holding no office, are seen to preach and baptize. The amount of special pleading that has been used to give this question the form that it commonly bears, is in our judgment, one of the most curious facts that we know in the history of the human mind. When the reason of the thing is canvassed, it returns a similar answer to that which is derived from Scripture. *It* argues thus: To impose an absolute form of church policy, would be for the word of God to pander

to that love of the external which it so directly combats, and which without encouragement, is always a prevailing tendency in men. To follow such a method would be for the bible to lend some countenance to the wicked and foolish thought which seeks to make matters of religion, what in any other subject all reasonable persons are content to regard as matters of convenience. To pursue such a course would be for Scripture to be guilty of the shallow philosophy, which causes the style to dictate to the thought, instead of allowing the thought to be the parent of the style. To sanction this theory, would be to regard that book which is intended for all times and nations, as enjoining upon mankind a Chinese existence, an absence of change, and therefore an absence of thought. In holding such a view we are practically guilty of supposing that Society is forbidden by the Creator to alter and improve, since to impose upon it one absolute mode in which thought and feeling are to be expressed, is almost equivalent with prescribing thoughts and emotions that shall not change in kind or degree. When observation is called in to report upon the subject, it gives its testimony to the same effect. We learn from it that the men who have held the dogma of a stereotyped plan of spiritual polity, whilst they have enjoyed the bad credit of retarding progress, of encouraging superstition and priestly pretensions, have never been able to show that their view was reconcilable with society, at any time at least in which men employed their minds. In the degree in which they have succeeded in binding it upon mankind, they have done much evil; but their success has never been more than partial. There has generally been enough of resistance to shew that the dogma was not true to nature. In the very directions in which it appeared to be recognised, or applauded, there has been enough of variety in opinion

and practice, to convince all but the interested and the weak, that they were advocating a chimera, and one of evil influence. We believe in regard to those old codes of theological sentiment, that one of their worst and silliest peculiarities consists in those chapters, in which they labour to force Scripture to sanction them, in imposing an absolute formula for the government of the churches. We discern in this fact one principal reason how it is that religion so readily allies itself with all that is secular and carnal. If it lends itself with peculiar facility to the political designs of the day, if it exhibits such salient points on which the ambitious and worldly can lay hold, if it exhibits so many topics with which men of every shade of opinion can sympathise, if it offers such strong allurements to the carnal, to adopt its tenets, and exert its functions; if it tends so directly to cherish one class so proverbial for their subtlety, arrogance and tyranny; and another class as notorious for their easy faith, their bigotry, their tameness, their superstition, if it ministers and always has ministered to these ends, we descry one chief cause of the phenomenon, in the peremptory manner in which it gives out a regular framework as a canon of the word of God. On again passing the eye over these old relics of past ages, one feels disposed to say that in respect of their doctrine, they seem to promise more than they realize. If they do not exhibit the whole theory of the plan of redemption, why is it that they are credited with that much? Why is it that they attempt to do that, which deal with it as they would, they must leave incomplete? In the chapter of doctrine the one system stands chargeable with leaving no proper place for the grace of God; the other with allowing as little room for human agency. Whilst the Calvinistic code appears to explain the mechanism of the plan of salvation, it adverts so little to the part which the

believer should take as a worker together with God, that except in a few minds of strong texture it has been from first to last a system of stern fatalism. In a code of opinions professing to contain all that is momentous, why is it that this most essential point is left out? Why is there no article to apprise us along what visible channels the unseen process may be expected to run? why is it that so far as any express statement goes, we are left to derive the conclusion that in every view of the case, man has no part or lot in the matter? It looks quite as necessary that we should be made aware of the part to be played by second causes, as that we should be informed of the fixed purpose of the first cause. In the article of the interpretation of Scripture, these plans which we so readily take as catholic, leave us as much in the dark. What is the calculus that we ought to apply, in what manner we should apply it; what is the particular relation of the two economies to each other; by what rule shall we make the one to shed light upon the other,—in what direction shall we find any answer to these questions? With reference to the evolution of prophecy, we find ourselves in a similar dilemma. Our systems that we accept as comprising all that is needful, give us no help; and yet it is an important subject. The progress of religion is intimately connected with it. When Christ promises the spirit to the Church, he declares of him, “he will shew you things to come.” Unless the Christian can determine where he is, how much has passed, and how much is yet to come, he must, to a considerable degree, walk in darkness. We could not imagine the Church to be in a situation in which its views were broad, and its piety efficient, whilst its notions of prophecy were incorrect or dim. Our codes and standards make little reference to the subject. They bring forward no principles by which men should be guided in unrolling the map of events.

Another topic to which systems of theology devote little attention, is the practical results in conduct, to which belief should lead. The bible seems to contemplate these as the great propelling influence, by which the gospel is to overcome the resistance of evil. We do not seem to endow them with that much of importance. We regard it as momentous that it should be determined with great precision in what direction our speculation should move: but hold it to be of little consequence that our eyes should be open to the claims of the things to be done. Hence, the tendency that has been so constantly shewn to take mere doctrinal views of men and things. Hence, the dislike evinced by a large class to the terms duty, morality, or virtue—a dislike which has extended to the qualities, as well as to their names. Hence the circumstance that at any given period, the church has always been conspicuous for the tenacity with which it has maintained and enforced its dogmas, and scarcely ever remarkable for having rendered the truth attractive by its practice. Hence the phenomenon that in every generation, men are to be found who did not profess religion, or who avowed unsound opinions; and who have shown themselves more amiable and upright, than any thing that was to be seen in those fraternities in which high orthodoxy reigned.

In a word, it is our judgment that modes of opinion which denoted originality, acumen and real piety, in the men who first devised, or adopted them, have been accepted by the churches for more than they really contain. have been interlaced with the interests and carnal feelings of men, have been turned into a fixed rule, have been made to retard the advance of mankind, and whilst they may have imparted some regularity to events, and some precision to thinking, have in these latter days at least, been productive of that style of feeling which clings to the form, rather than of that which attaches itself to the substance.

CHAPTER II.

THE TWO ECONOMIES.

"The Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ."—JOHN I. 17.

No difficulty confronts us at the outset of this subject. All critics admit that the Bible is made up of two great portions which differ from each other in features obvious enough to warrant a line of distinction between them. You may express this difference by terms whose value is not quite equivalent, but the general fact is allowed.—Some may prefer to denote them as two Testaments, others as two Covenants, others as two Dispensations or Economies: those who do not agree as to the name, allow the thing. Beyond this point, however, the agreement ceases. It is probable that no two interpreters would return the same answer to the question, what is the distinguishing peculiarity of each of these economies? Some look upon the two as so much alike, that they are in the habit of confounding and mixing them up. Some regard the two as very dissimilar, without perhaps being able to state in what the difference consists. Some think so badly of the older of the two, that they practically treat it as that which has no longer any meaning or use. Many of the greatest errors in faith and practice, have arisen from false ideas on this topic. It is natural that it should be so. If there be few questions in theology of greater width than this, then the mistakes that flow out of misapprehension in regard to it will by natural consequence be of large size. The notion that grew up with respect to the form, shape and ritual of the church, that ruled with such power over the minds of so great a number of

men, that received no blow of any weight until the sixteenth century, that has outlived the wound which it then received, and that even now claims the homage of five-sixths of the people of Christendom, may be adduced as an example of the principle which we alledge. In this complex idea was included the sanctity of places and buildings, a prescribed form and situation for edifices, the sacredness of certain days and seasons, the incumbency of altars, censers, fonts, lavers. The necessity of a priesthood distinguished by a costume, the sanctity of certain ceremonies and rites, the title of a priestly body to levy tythes, enact laws and demand reverence from men. We are not yet far enough advanced to be able to say to any considerable number of the church, is not this system an obvious imitation of the framework of the Jewish hierarchy? But although we might not receive the answer to this question that we consider to be the correct one, we take the liberty to reply to it ourselves. The system is without doubt, the product of a misapprehension of the character of the old testament. It owes its peculiar features to this, that it takes the symbol in place of the thought. Instead of examining and finding the value of altars, dresses, times and places, it carries these things over in the raw state. Instead of searching for the meaning of types of deep import, it is satisfied to take them as they stand. An apostle would seem to tell us that the old economy was a pantomime, the men and women who occupy places in it merely players; and that the actions which they performed were done, not so much with an eye to themselves as to us. Heedless or ignorant of this, the teachers of religion, ever since the death of Christ, have made it their study to repeat the drama. They have been more anxious to be types than facts. Their conduct has been such as to lead men to suppose that it was their

object to serve as beacons to the persons of some future generation, rather than to be something substantial and good for the benefit of their own times. Thus, these nineteen centuries, instead of exhibiting to our view the pleasing landscape of a Church ever studious to bring over from the pages of the olden economy the ideas enclosed within the myth, have shewn us the counterfeit presentment of a hierarchy mainly zealous to clothe itself in the obsolete costume. And it has effected this object. And thus, in place of standing forth as a body which has knowingly sought to be a fellow-worker together with God, and with open face and full consciousness, wittingly to unfold the chart of events, it has held the far inferior position of a passive thing, that looks as if it had been coerced by an iron fate to subsist without consciousness, and to find its chief happiness in arraying itself in hieroglyphics which it could not read, in wrapping itself in an Algebra, which it could not decipher.

The ideas and practices that have obtained in the article of War, are another illustration of the principle with which we are dealing. There has been vicious intermixture here also. Men have looked back upon the pages of the old economy, and have perceived that war is a common event in these times. They further perceive that it is a circumstance which God sanctions or enjoins. The inquiry stops at this point. It is presumed that sufficient data have been collected on which to rear a doctrine.

The doctrine evolved is to this effect, that what was fit for the old time, cannot be unsuitable to the new. Built up in this notion, men have carried on war with so much consistency and on so large a scale, that the philosopher, taking his survey of history, and perceiving that there was no circumstance more common in the incidents of human life, pronounced a state of war to be that which is the

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most natural to our race. Not only have battle fields been common throughout all those centuries which we call Christian, but Religion has been ready at every turn of affairs, to give its sanction to the transaction. It has seconded human nature with so much earnestness, as to enable the combatants to feel not that they were infringing the spirit of the Gospel, but rather that they were carrying it forth into its legitimate results. The contests between the Christians and the barbarous invaders of the Roman empire; the long struggles between the crescent and the cross; the events connected with the long drama of the Seven Crusades; the long protracted disputes between the Emperors and the Pope; the transactions of the Spaniards in America, and in the Netherlands, the incidents of the thirty years war, those of the Common Wealth in England, and the scenes of carnage in France about the same period, are a few examples of the principle to which we advert. They show that religion has not kept itself aloof from this the foulest of all the transactions with which men are conversant. They prove that religion has been ever ready to sound the trumpet, and to rouse the flagging energies of men by representing death in such controversies as the readiest path to the joys of Heaven. Observation and reason almost without the help of Theology, begin to entertain doubts as to the rectitude of the views that hitherto have guided men in relation to this question. They utter whispers to the effect that the type has been taken in the room of the doctrine. They remind us that even in the days of the old testament, war was held to be a crime, except in those instances in which it could plead the sanction, thus saith the Lord. They tell us to explore the pages of the ancient economy in such a manner as to see in Judea the platform of the church, in the hostile tribes that environed it the evil influences to

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 the end; and in the wars of the Jews, the active aggres-
 sive manner in which we should demean ourselves toward
 the dogmas and practices by which Satan endeavours to
 sap the faith. Beyond question they argue justly. To
 read the Old Testament in this manner would lead to re-
 sults of a very beneficial kind. Much intelligence would
 be called forth. The object would be to arrive at a clear
 solution of the meaning of each war that was waged.
 New thoughts and doctrines would grow out of the search.
 Returning from the survey, men would be no longer dis-
 posed to go forth in hostile guise against their fellow be-
 ings. The observations they had collected would all teach
 them to seek peace and to ensue it. They would have
 discovered that there are worse foes than those of flesh
 and blood, conflicts more terrible than those between com-
 panies of armed men. Instead of collecting incitements
 to sally out and render the earth more hateful than it
 commonly is, they would have found that which is fitted
 to make it rejoice and blossom. They would discover
 that the principal part of the conflict to which they are in-
 vited, concerns their own personal vices. Engrossed with
 these with what different feelings would they look forth
 upon the doings of others, how far removed would they
 be from the temper that would induce them to draw the
 carnal weapon; occupied in carrying on an unsparing
 war against the foes in their own bosoms what different
 men would they be from those who leaving their sins to
 flourish, made it their religion to go forth without a sum-
 mons, and to see in their fellow men the Canaanites, or
 the Philistines, whom it beseemed them to root out of the
 land. Society begins to own its error in this direction. It
 faintly declares that men have long been mistaken here.
 It vaguely permits us to take the spirit, rather than the let-

ter of Jewish history. It feebly gives us to understand that by adopting this course in the case in question, we shall come at consequences not adverse, but propitious to the welfare of mankind. We take the admission, and believe that it may be improved into a broad principle. In the course of our remarks, we shall endeavour to make it appear that this is not a solitary instance, but that in *many* cases the letter has been taken for the spirit. We trust also, that the conviction may grow up, that to follow the opposite course in each example, will be attended with as good results as it is admitted would flow from the change in the present question.

The subject of *capital punishments* stands on the same plane. Men have gone on with deliberation in handing over their fellows to cruel deaths. Until very recently, they have not even suspected that there was any flaw in their view of the matter. The countries that have the credit of cherishing the truth in its greatest purity, are not behind the others in their addictedness to the punishment of death. In the moment in which we live, that portion of the public which we call religious, very generally maintain the incumbency of the practice. Those who think otherwise, are an inconsiderable number. The opposition that begins to shew itself to the idea, has not taken its rise from those who make Theology their study. It sprung up in countries where thinkers generally are under the sway of infidel opinions. In our own nation, it prevails almost entirely amongst those who feel very cool in regard to modes and creeds. What a remarkable fact! The adoration of the letter detains those who are under its power in a lower state of moral feeling than belongs to those who have thrown off allegiance to religion in the whole extent. To think wrongously on these subjects, appears in its practical consequences a worse evil than

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not to think at all. To confound two separate economies seems in some instances to carry with it worse results than to be without a faith. To confess the whole truth, Theology very recently has exhibited a faint inclination to second the dictates of sound reason and true philanthropy in the question. She has been heard to utter faint whisperings that may be regarded as the harbinger of an important change. She has feebly admitted that it may be possible to reconcile the verdict of inspiration with the views that legislators profess to have derived from observation and reason. One or two treatises emanating from professed Theologians, have dared to propound the sentiment that the old and sanguinary view is the fruit of our not translating the symbol into its spiritual import. One of these works has applied close analysis to the Bible.—The conclusion at which it arrives after much calm discussion is this, that the passages commanding the death of criminals, and which we have been in the habit of applying as they stand, are mythological. They belong to the vocabulary of types; they are designed, in common with the sacrifice of animals, to shadow forth a fact of redemption. Like the other offerings, they are preparatory, anticipative, prospective. Like them they are local, temporary, restricted. Like them they find their terminus in the death of the Son of God. Thus a circumstance which, when regarded in its proper philosophical phasis, serves to tell us in a very lively manner of the magnitude of that event that required human victims to foreshadow it, taken up in its harsh literality, becomes a means of clothing practices inexpressibly savage and diabolical with the semblance of holiness.

There cannot be a doubt, that in many other instances the Church has derived its doctrine from the Old Testament without transmuting the symbol into the thought.

To assign examples:—The ideas that prevailed so long in regard to the conduct to be pursued toward those who differ from us in religious sentiments; the opinions that still exist as to the rightness of retaliation; the practice of administering oaths; the views that are entertained in regard to the poor, and the blessedness that belongs to those who relieve their necessities; the notions that subsist relative to the interpretation of prophecy; the expectation that the national Israel shall be restored to their own land: the dogma that would teach us to look for a corporeal manifestation of Messiah previous to the end of the world.—These are a specimen of a set of opinions which are many in number, which are very inveterate in their nature, which we consider to be very prejudicial in their effects, and all of which we believe to be the product of a shallow and false theology, that conveys doctrines from one economy to the other without subjecting them to any assimilating process. A more reasonable system of hermeneutics would argue thus: “we have two names; but why should this be the case unless there are two things? Christ and the Apostles make frequent comparisons and contrasts between the economies, why should we restrict the difference to the prominent points which they adduce: is it not much more natural to suppose that each is homogeneous, and that the diversity which exists between the two at some quarters, runs all the way through? The writers of the New Testament devote much space in detailing the reasons that distinguish between the two dispensations,—they affirm that the distinction is highly important—they loudly warn men not to confound the two—they sharply censure those who have forgotten the distinction, and have returned to the rudiments of the world—they prophecy of great evils that were to rush in in consequence of mixing up. Is it probable that they refer only

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to some sections of the Old Testament ; would not their language lead you to think that the old economy, being of one kind, the principles which they lay down apply to the whole ? Can we allege that they refer us to any particular portions, and that they entitle us to say of them that they are exceptions to the general rule ? The prophecies, in many instances, declare that one economy is to pass away, and that another is to take its place. They make much of this thought. They exhibit it as a cardinal matter. Can it be said that we maintain this idea when we endeavour to retain any part of the old dispensation in its primary form ? The clear reasoner further remarks that direct analysis into the contents of each economy, confirms the opinion at every step, that the philosophy of both consists in discerning a formal difference which may be illustrated by the relation that there is between the two sides of an equation. Do we keep up to the level of this principle when we allow sentiment, or prejudice, or selfishness, or indolence, to carry the thought in the raw state from the Jewish into the Christian system ? Pious commentators have long been seeking to discover the thoughts that are enclosed within the symbol. It cannot be questioned but that they have succeeded in a large extent. It cannot be denied that their studies have put the Church in possession of all the wealth that belongs to her. But they have done good by following an assignable course.— They have conferred advantage exactly in proportion as they have evolved the latent spirit that is couched under the emblem. Does not reason warrant us to expect that future accessions of wealth must proceed from persisting in the same plan ? If in every instance in which they have sunk a shaft they have come at results of the same kind, is it not fair to conclude that there is but one vein in the whole field ? If every chapter of the Old Testa-

ment contains at least several passages susceptible of a spiritual meaning, is it not reasonable to think the direction of true philosophy must be along the line which extends this principle? If in a long course of ages every thing which looks specious or wholesome, has been extracted on the principle of converting the natural into the spiritual, is it not likely that all the wisdom yet to be discovered, will be attained to by prosecuting the same plan? The dialectician further remarks that there are opinions which society now owns to be false, and practices which it now acknowledges to be pernicious, which nevertheless must be considered divine, if we follow the letter. When it is found that these dogmas become the reverse of all this, and shew themselves to be reasonable, lovely and beneficial, on the principle of taking the equivalent, does it not seem likely to consider that high discovery yet awaits us along this track, that incalculable advantages are yet to be found in the direction of comparing type and doctrine together?" Among the other evils that we consider to have arisen from erroneous views of the relation of the two economies, we deem it not the least that a broad mark has been presented to the sceptical spirit. Those who are acquainted with the writings of this school must be aware that a great part of the objections urged against the Christian system, consist of positions taken from the Old Testament. As things now stand it is scarcely possible to reply to them in a cogent manner. The crimes alleged against the saints, or the other actors in Jewish history, are drawn out in long array; and the question is put, how can a book which contains such an amount of impure deeds, pretend to be an inspired code of doctrine and morals. The church cannot rebut the objection by saying that it is not viewed in this light in its literal import. It cannot reply, we subject it to a process of trans-

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lation before we apply it to these purposes. Were it to use this argument, the sceptic could refute it by saying that it is not so. He could properly object—you take its form of ecclesiastical administration, its feasts, its tythes, its holy days—you take the Ten Commandments in a literal form as the basis of your moral precepts—you accept your doctrines in regard to war, criminal law, oaths, and many other points from its letter and surface. With what reason can you presume to say that the other parts of it are not to be applied in their primary aspect? Scepticism must continue to occupy strong ground until a system be adopted which shall be able to say, the old economy is not liable to the objections which you allege against it; for it is from first to last a volume having a double construction, and the spiritual version which is to be procured by comparing it with the New Testament, is that sense in which we receive it as containing matter of doctrine, reproof, conviction and instruction in righteousness.

On the whole, there is a considerable amount of evidence to which little objection could be taken to the effect that there really are two economies, and that the line which we draw between them in certain parts, should be produced along the whole extent. In conformity with this principle, one part of the Church would admit that the complicated frame-work which Popery set up, and which it defends on the plea that it resembles the Jewish institutions, is not agreeable to the genius of the Christian system. As far as this goes, we have the consent of the most spiritual men to the fact that it will not answer here to imitate the letter; that enormous evils have resulted from so doing, and that it is essential here to translate the symbol into its thought. Again, the agreement of the best men of the age could be procured to the dogma that men

have entirely erred in supposing that they could fairly derive from the old economy, a rule which makes it right to murder a man for his opinions. To this extent all the evangelical allow that we must not take the letter, but must be guided by the spirit. Again, we have the best thinkers with us on the question of war. Here, say they, it leads to the worst results to take the superficial or apparent idea. In the article of capital punishments, the most intelligent would concur in believing that there must be some defect in our present mode of interpretation, if we can make the bible seem to give its sanction to a practice so abhorrent to feeling and reason. On the subject of the objections raised by sceptics, and these principally taken from the letter of the Old Testament, most reasonable persons would concur in saying that they cannot be answered on the present system—that for us to take our doctrine and morals from the surface of the book in one instance, and to refuse the same privilege to others in different directions, shews a want of philosophy, and that the only effectual reply to objections of this sort, would be a doctrine announced and carried out—that the proper system of hermenentics goes beneath the surface, and so comes at the treasure hid in the field. Further, we have the concurrence of all that are spiritual to the following positions, that the mode of interpretation that has been pursued by the deepest divines has been to seek for the latent thought concealed beneath the narrative or the symbol,—that all the valuable discoveries made by them were along this track—that whenever they settle any matter in such a way as that it becomes a fixed point, it is when they are on this road—that in most instances where their researches are disallowed and upset, they have been wandering from this line, and that true believers generally look to this principle for those fuller evolutions of divine

truth by which the plan of redemption is to be unrolled until the purposes of God are all disclosed. So then to announce these economies to be different in character in the whole extent, is not so much to put forth a new thought, as to bring forward opinions already in existence. It is to give form to what is loose, to give distinctness to what is vague, to collect what is scattered, to utter what is surmised. It seems plain to us that all the real progress which theological science is to make, must proceed from these premises, and must keep up the distinction between the two testaments along the whole course of enquiry.—One of the preliminaries necessary before such a definite plan can be followed, will obviously be to examine in what degree this method has been overlooked in past researches. Several very prominent subjects will directly present themselves as the results of imperfect analysis and confusion of ideas in the past. These points of doctrine, form or precept being examined, and being set down as matters that have not been sifted, but have been brought over from the Old Testament in the primary form, it will become an object to ascertain their spiritual import, and to avoid in future such imperfect analysis. The equation being cleared of unknown quantities, the code of opinions being purged of things hostile to honest enquiry, the question being reduced to a simple expression, opportunity would be afforded for a fair start. Men would find themselves occupying a more scientific attitude in relation to the Scriptures than they ever held before. They would see two dispensations of dissimilar form spread out before them, and would perceive that the problem which they were invited to solve was this, how to compare the two together so as to discern their points of coincidence; and discerning these, to find in them the doctrine, precept and prophecy that is to regulate the opinions of the Churches.

The method hitherto employed, has had little or nothing of this precise character. Men have stumbled upon types here and there—have been astonished at their own discoveries, and have been very commonly looked upon by their cotemporaries as not a little fanciful and fool-hardy in thus pretending to see beneath the surface. As they did not set forth with the expectation of finding deposits under every portion of the word, the shafts they have sunk are at unequal distances. Thus the surface of the Bible, like the face of a backgammon board, or of a geological map, shews different colours. Here it is spiritual, there it is natural, and here it is spiritual again. Each new enquirer follows the same arbitrary plan, and presents his researches in such a manner to the public, as if he had fallen in with very strange adventures in discovering prophecy, or doctrine, where he had no right to look for them. There has been no case as yet where a man has commenced with the theorem, that it became him to attempt to drive a shaft through from end to end, on the notion that the whole territory contained hidden treasure. But that which has been done in a desultory manner, will be performed on accurate principles, provided we are correct in our opinion that the Old Testament is typical throughout, and provided that critics of spiritual character could be induced to go off upon this idea. The Bible would then come in for some share of that mode of investigation which has been so successfully applied to several branches of science. Men of stringent disposition would be heard to say, since spiritual things are to be compared with spiritual, on what method shall the enquiry be conducted? They would propose questions like this at the outset,—What is the extent of the objects to be compared; are Old Testament and New to be assumed as two parallel lines, and does the route of discovery consist in find-

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ing the points at which they touch,—how many such points have been already ascertained,—on what principle were they determined, and how can things already known and admitted, be made subservient in leading to the elucidation of other subjects that as yet are unexplored? In prosecuting these enquiries, attention would be directed to each part of the Old Testament in its own order. What are the seven days of creation, would of course be one of the first questions? Is the first day the Edenic period, the second the antediluvian, the third the time of the law, the fourth that of Christ and the completion of the canon, the fifth the rise of Anti-christ, the sixth the Millennarian period, the seventh the everlasting rest? The enquiry would be made what is the exact relation of Eden to the new economy, what is the value of events from Adam to Noah in a secondary or spiritual sense, what is the thought contained in the deluge, and what is the moral of the period of the patriarchs. Similar analysis would be directed to the events connected with the captivity in Egypt, with the passage through the wilderness, and the entering into Canaan. The portion that would probably demand and receive the deepest study, is that chapter where God delivers the institutions to Moses. Little as the Bible in general is known, we can scarcely understand how it happens that this momentous section should have been so much neglected. As it at present stands, the weary school-boy drags through it unwillingly, and contracts that dislike to the Bible which continues through life, the professional student gets over it as he best may, the stupid devotee finds in it ample room for his favourite indulgence of blind and ignorant adoration, and the sceptic draws upon it for the chief supply of those plausible sophistries which he fires off at Revelation. It is melancholy that it should thus lie in the way, a stone of stumbling to the honest enquirer, a

lurking place to the man that brings evil devices to pass. The species of investigation which we suppose, would move up to it by regular approaches. The tabernacle would be examined in such a manner as that every curtain, post and ring, every part of the covering without—every piece of the furniture within, should be shewn to have its distinct meaning. The same accurate process would be applied to each fact belonging to the service,—the order of the Priest's courses; the dress of the High Priest, and of the Levites; the rites obligatory upon them; the nature of the different offerings; the philosophy of the several festivals; the meaning of each instrument of music that performed a part in the service of the house of God. We could imagine each article of this voluminous subject to be so canvassed, as that it should become matter of as much instruction as we derive at present from the whole series. In like manner, the institutes respecting things clean and unclean, and those others which regulated the conduct of the people in the various relations of life; as also those others which bore upon their demeanour toward the adjoining nations, would furnish matter of deep research that would inevitably lead on to great results. Another chapter would unfold itself in the events that befel the chosen people,—their departure from Egypt; their journey through the desert; their entry into Canaan; their adventures under Joshua, under the Judges, and under the Kings, would compose another subject of diegesis. As the Mosaic institutes would be found to contain doctrine and practice for the Church, so this latter section would probably be seen to shadow forth the evolutions and changes through which the modern Israel is to pass.—Further, an attempt might probably be made to find two parallel lines of prophecy, and that by placing the prophets from Isaiah to Malachi, in juxta position with the

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Apocalypse. Supposing that the two lines were found to correspond, and that a few leading points were discovered where there was obvious coincidence, a calculus would be procured that would seem adapted to obtain accurate solutions. Imagining for argument's sake, that these two lines consisted of the same events, the difference between them being only formal, or that which exists between a work and its index, this at the very outset would furnish a scale from which the relative size of the incidents could be ascertained. Each point of agreement as it was successively come at, would render the process more simple. And thus, instead of pursuing the unscientific and unsuccessful course of resorting to human history for an elucidation of prophecy, a method would be exhibited, by which the solution would lie entirely *within* the record. A comparison between two sets of symbols, both of them divine, would supply a mode of explanation short, simple, and under proper conditions, very certain. To turn the Old Testament to these uses, would be to break up what at present is really fallow ground. It would be to vindicate the Scripture, when it says that all these things are types, and were given for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. It would verify the assertion that gives us to believe that the elders ministered these things less for themselves than for us. It would seem to give practical demonstration that the seven days of creation are also seven periods in the kingdom of grace, by shewing us the man of the sixth day nourishing himself on the elements of the third day, feeding on the herbs and the fruit-tree, whose seed is in itself.

CHAPTER III.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

“ *We know that the Law is Spiritual.* ”—Rom. VII. 14.

Our preceding remarks are to the effect that the genius of the two economies has not been fully understood. The road that error has pursued, has consisted in bringing over from the old to the new, without translation. A little leaven leaveth the whole lump. It is not then surprising that the large amount in which this has been committed, should have affected the whole problem to a serious extent. If as Paul informs us, an adherence to the single rite of circumcision would vitiate the gospel, bring in the legal spirit, and make men debtors to do the whole law, how much more must this happen if the system of the New Testament has been polluted by large infusions from the old economy. If the opinion which we have expressed that the distinction between the two testaments is of such a nature as to separate them in their whole length and breadth, if this be correct, then the mere *locality* of this twentieth chapter of Exodus, would determine the view to be taken of its contents. The inference would run thus, it forms a part of the Mosaical system, but *it* is throughout typical in its character, therefore this chapter must be of the same texture. Most men, however, would deny the premises rather than allow themselves to be shut up to this conclusion. Notwithstanding this, the argument appears to us very strong. All the churches admit that there are two testaments. All confess that they are distinct in their general complexion. The erudite and pious in all would probably go so far as to allow, that with the exception of the decalogue and perhaps a few other portions, the Old

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Testament is to be regarded as one field of allegory, symbol, and type. But why these exceptions? When the Scriptures give out that they are made up of two portions, this announcement would warrant the expectation that each portion is to be interpreted on a principle that will extend to all its parts. When the sacred writers refer to the law, and in so doing quote in each direction from the Pentateuch, one would certainly suppose that they would say in so many words that the ten commandments belong to a different category. When they give us to understand that the bearing of the old testament upon the new, is that of an allegory upon a code of doctrine, when they warn men against confounding the two, when they affirm that the letter killeth, when they censure their proselytes for their proneness to return to bondage, when they make such important statements and in so many instances, one would anticipate that those sections that were not included, would have been expressly labelled. The locality of the decalogue and the absence of any such distinguishing clauses, furnish a valid reason why it is to be regarded as typical in its character, even previous to the examination of its contents. The prevalent opinion in every age has been that this system is designed to furnish a list of enactments which are moral or spiritual in their literal aspect. We do not stay to enquire by what steps this idea arrived at its present situation. We are content to take it as we find it fully grown. The decalogue being thus viewed as a moral system, a line was forcibly drawn between it and the general contents of the volume in which it stands. In answer to all those passages in either testament that speak of the abolition of the law, theologians were quite satisfied to say, that refers to the *ceremonial*, it cannot refer to the *moral* law. They did not stop to examine into the grounds of the distinction, nor to ask whether it was from

God, or of men. The name became to them a thing, the existence of a term was to them an argument apart from the correctness of that term. Content with this circular mode of reasoning, quieting its scruples with a word, a sentiment, in place of a fact, theology has gone on for centuries leaning on a distinction which it cannot shew to exist in the bible. Hence in the best systems of divinity, in the works that were considered the fittest for the instruction of youth, a section is generally set apart for the elucidation of what is called the moral law. Hence also of all subjects in theology, there is perhaps not one that has engrossed so much attention as the Sabbath, in the form in which it is propounded in this system. From the reformation downwards, legislators have been constantly dealing with it—countless statutes have been published enforcing its observance—innumerable treatises have enlarged upon the goodness of the institution, it has been a standing theme of eloquent declamation, the morality of nations has been estimated by this test, it has affected all institutions, it has gone far to bestow upon certain races the peculiar character that distinguishes them, be it good or bad—it has in many quarters been the chief or the only tenet that has laid hold upon the mind and influenced the practice. The effect of this code, assumed to be moral, has of course been very great. If one carnal institute would vitiate the gospel in a degree, ten enactments of this character, must terribly obstruct it. We think that its operation may be stated in the following manner. To a large class, one that has always included nine-tenths of the professors of religion, it has stood in the place of all theology. In them it has helped to foster the disposition which reduces divine things down to the level of what the regenerate man will admit or perform. While it would not be possible to devise a system that this arminian tem-

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 on the Ten Commandments, in their literal form, have
 had this effect. To this scarce, we refer much of that
 legal spirit which, since the beginning of the seventeenth
 century, has been the most common feature in all the
 churches. Men have perceived that a few points of very
 diluted morality, and a few ceremonies that called for no
 morality at all, have composed the capital of the religious
 community. They have found that it is not peculiarly
 difficult or unpleasant to assume that much of a quasi re-
 ligious character. They have experienced no great dif-
 ficulty in teaching this much to those within the sphere of
 their influence; and hence the usual aspect of things for a
 considerable time past, has been a visible Church, almost
 co-extensive with the population of countries. A consi-
 derable amount of Scripture accepted in a natural, literal,
 and unspiritualised version, necessarily produces this ef-
 fect. It causes the offence of the cross to cease. It offers
 a way of salvation free from rugged places. It seems to
 render compatible the service of God and of the world.
 In spite of the inducements held out to adopt a religion
 wholly of human construction, there have been godly men
 along this period. The law which makes nothing perfect,
 has not succeeded in turning away the eyes of such from
 the cross of Christ, but it causes them to see it through a
 mist. It has not prevented them from escaping from
 Egypt, but it has hindered them from proceeding far on
 their way. It has not kept them from taking the true
 foundation, but it has deterred them from laying much
 upon it, except hay, wood and stubble. That so great a
 multitude connect themselves with religion without being
 religious, that so many others really sincere, are weak,

sickly and asleep, we ascribe in a great degree to the power of the letter. Doctrine is presented in such a shape and with such accompaniments, that it can be embraced without faith, or if faith does spring up, the infusion of old leaven is so strong as to detain it at the lowest conceivable point.

A suspicion has prevailed in some quarters, that men were wrong in their views of the moral law, so called. But the suspicion has been generally advanced in a manner so very illogical and weak, that it has excited attention only to produce contempt. Nothing can be more prejudicial in doctrinal matters than to say of any particular subject, I do not like it *because* I do not like it. The argument might be accepted as valid against Dr. Fell, it cannot be received as sufficient against the Ten Commandments. Now this has been the principal reason that has been urged. A few men, probably pious, and certainly weak-minded, have felt that there was something wrong in this direction. They have stated their sentiment—they have backed it with the remark, that our opinions in regard to the decalogue, were not in character or keeping with the Gospel. So far we deem them right. But a sentiment can only beget its like. It cannot pull down strongholds—it cannot remove rooted convictions—it cannot displace that which has even a show of argument in its favour. The Antinomian school has felt properly, but it has reasoned weakly in this matter. It has scarcely advanced the subject. It has probably engendered as much dislike as it has produced agreement with its tenets. A man on approaching this question, can hardly feel toward his forerunners of this school that they have smoothed the way, or facilitated the task. We consider it to be a fair objection to the general opinion in regard to the Ten Commandments, to say of them, that they lie in the heart of the old economy. Their *latitude* proves some-

thing. It is a good preliminary. It fully warrants further search into the subject. We likewise regard it as a solid objection to urge, that the ideas which the Bible gives forth as to the great contrast between the two economies,—as to the peculiar liberty that belongs to the gospel—as to the completeness of the work of Christ—as to the plenary manner in which he fulfilled the law, do not at all coincide with the received views relative to the decalogue. Either of these arguments is good as an advanced post, neither of them will suffice for an army of attack. The main reason on which we depend is this,—the examination of the contents of the Ten Commandments. When analysed they give forth the same effects with the rest of the economy in which they are found. They loom out, they throw off a skin. They shew themselves susceptible of a higher or deeper meaning than the apparent one. That deeper, more mystical sense, agrees with the context of all Scripture, with the general mind of the spirit. It melts into harmony with the whole colouring of the Bible. The superficial sense is temporary and local. It agrees with Judaism, it does not agree with the dispensation of the spirit. This is the position on which we rely. If it can be made good, the argument does not admit of an answer. It interweaves this portion with all the rest. It interprets the Ten Commandments by the rule of all Scripture, and then it interprets all Scripture by the Ten Commandments. It tries the question back and forward.

I. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This institute is not in the highest form; it is in the allegorical, or figurative shape. It has as much of the symbolic about it as the other parts of the volume in which it stands.—Therefore we consider it to be of the same substance; therefore we regard it as occupying the same level. It is symbolic, inasmuch as it employs the term *gods* in a sense

which is not actual. It designs to say, no desire must interfere with my service, no inclination must oppose my authority ; every feeling must be in subjection to my will. But it expresses this by implication—this is not the apparent or superficial thought. To come at this, the process of digging or diving must be resorted to, as in all other parts of the Old Testament. Like the other portion of the volume to which it belongs, it declares itself to be spiritual by this test, that it will not endure to be pushed to the full extent of the letter. Carried out thus far, it ceases to be true ; because it would then admit the existence of other gods, and by so doing, would contradict the rest of Scripture. The literal sense cannot be the true or highest sense, because when urged as far as it will go, it does not agree with the general tenor of the Word of God. The spiritual meaning must be the true one, because considered on all sides, it coincides with every thing else in Revelation. The institute intends to say,—you must not act as if there were other gods. But it does not say this : it leaves you to infer it. In order to come at this thought, one must remove the surface. To procure it, that process of comparison by which the value of other types is determined, must be gone through. This sense does not arise directly out of the passage—it is obtained by striking an average. But this passage which gives forth an idea in a latent manner, has, like other figurative statements, correlative passages which express the thought in a higher form, and one which is not liable to be mistaken. There is mysticism here ; there is no mysticism where our Lord says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”—John, too, announces the same doctrine without a metaphor when he says, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

We view this enactment as mythical,—First, because it

occurs in a volume, the other parts of which are allowed to be of this texture,—Secondly, because when taken in its strict literality, it in common with all symbols, exhibits weakness, and refuses to be so handled,—Thirdly, because there are many other passages which, standing to this one in the relation of glosses or antitypes, express what is obviously the same idea, and without a figure.

II. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of" &c. This enactment when construed in the literal sense makes it to be an act of treason against the most high, when men carve a statue, or paint a portrait, or stamp a coin, or for purposes of science give a representation of any one of all the works of God. It attaches guilt to that which is not in itself a crime. We can understand how for wise purposes such an institution might be clothed with force for a time. We cannot understand how it should be placed on the list of those principles which are to be of authority for ever. It is an intelligible notion that in common with many other similar regulations it should have been imposed upon a particular nation, which in enduring the yoke was thereby to furnish instruction to the men of an after period ; but it is not a reasonable thought that would represent it as a rule that was designed to define a course of conduct for the men of all times. One can bear to look upon it as temporary and local—it shocks our reason to suppose it catholic and eternal. It is quite otherwise when it is stripped of the symbol. It then becomes a beautiful thought. It then bears this meaning—as the first regulation enjoins that God alone is to be worshipped, so this second prosecuting the idea, forbids that any image should be carved upon the heart, lays down the principle that no being inferior to the most high, is to take an inseparable hold upon the affections. Images of things and persons, may be allowed to

float through the mind, they may even be permitted to harbour there for a time, but they must not be cut into its substance, for in that case they cannot be removed. No one can dispute but that this is a philosophical idea; as little can it be denied that it is scriptural. That passage of Ezekiel where the house of Israel is censured because each man is to be found in "the chambers of his imagery," will occur to many minds as expressing a parallel thought. We believe that under the figure in this enactment, there lies a doctrine which enjoins that the heart should be kept with all diligence—that no earthly thoughts should be suffered to take root there—that no created objects should be suffered to grave their likeness there—that none of its powers should be thrown away upon the adoration of things temporal—that Jehovah alone is worthy to reign there. So to read the regulation is to adopt a meaning which corresponds thoroughly with its own tenour—which coincides with all scripture—which has no local or accidental aspect—which imposes no unreasonable tyranny, and which presents us with a valuable illustration that we had not seen because of the symbol.

III. "Thou shalt not take the name" &c. The amount of meaning at present extracted from this institute, is trifling; and on the whole, the influence produced by it is superficial. It tends to austerities and decencies, it does not lead to realities. The *name* being allowed to stand for the sense that is most apparent, punctiliousness in regard to language, is the chief effect contemplated or realised. No man sees in the enactment the guilt and the sentence of the hypocrite. No man discerns in it what so much of Scripture vindicates, that it is a serious matter to cover with a covering which is not of God's spirit. Extreme nicety in regard to words, solemnity of demeanour, endless sermons and tracts upon the sins of cursing

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and blaspheming, as it is termed, such are the poor re-
sults derived from a statute that contains within it much
deeper thoughts. It suited the divine purposes to place
before a people for a time, a regulation so framed that it
taught them deep reverence in making mention of his
names and titles. What we object to, is that what an-
swered a temporary end, should be viewed as the final
meaning and intention. When the many passages in Old
and New Testament which treat of the tendency in men
to take the form in place of the reality, which deal with
will worship in all its shapes, which shew up man's prone-
ness to the external instead of the actual, which detect the
inclination in men to place godliness in anything else but
that in which it really consists, which declare that obla-
tion and incense are an abomination, except when offered
with the true design, that the heart is the seat of vital re-
ligion, that God will be satisfied with nothing short of it,
that he is a jealous God, who will not be mocked, when
such portions, constituting as they do the most frequent
features of the Bible, are fully analysed, it must occur to
many minds that this enactment refers to a subject much
deeper than that to which it is usually applied. Again,
when the many Scriptures that describe God's love toward
the Church are weighed ; when it is borne in mind how
he dwells upon the topic, how he illustrates it by father
and children—by the Eagle and its offspring, by the hus-
band and the wife, by the root and the branches, by the
shepherd and the sheep, by the head and the members—
to take his name in vain, becomes an idea full of meaning.
Again, when those other Scriptures are canvassed wherein
God gives his people a new name—wherein He declares
that He writes them upon His heart, that He puts a mark
upon their foreheads, that He knows them that are His,
that He shall separate between the sheep and the goats—

between the grain and the chaff, between the wheat and the tares, then this commandment becomes invested with the thought that it is an impious attempt to call God father when his spirit is not in us. Again, when those texts that speak of God's jealousy of his own honour, are discussed, texts wherein language is exhausted in narrating how impracticable it is to deceive him, how surely this will bring down punishment upon the impostor, how much worse it shall fare with those who put on sheep's clothing than with those who eschew a profession, then this enactment is made to utter its censure upon a crime which even apart from the declarations of scripture, one might have concluded to be among the most devilish that man can commit. Finally, when those many other passages are examined wherein the name of God stands for as much as the *character* or *person*, the subject is still further invested with importance. From these reasons we entertain no doubt that the third commandment mainly refers to false religion, and chiefly contemplates that wicked tendency which on some plea or other always induces the great majority of mankind to take the name of Jehovah without being betrothed to him. At present it can only prevent offences of the lips. At present it can affect only the appearance, but can produce no radical change upon men. As it is now understood, it only helps to foster formalists and hypocrites. It makes decencies to pass current for principles, and assists in giving to a large portion of society that constrained, hollow and heartless aspect, under which vice thrives with rank luxuriance, and beneath which human nature shews really more hateful than when it stands out in bold undisguised badness.—Clothed with the meaning which we attach to it, this institute will be seen to deal with a subject of vital moment. Understood in this sense, it will achieve effects which ^go

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deeper than the surface. It will say to the man disposed to palter with things eternal, your conduct is at once dangerous and fruitless, it will accomplish no purpose but that of aggravating your punishment, for God views with extreme jealousy any attempt to counterfeit his name. Thus, instead of cherishing, it will deter the hypocrite. To the converted man, on the other hand, it will speak this language. The Most High has adopted you as a son, He has baptised you into His name. You may so act as that this distinction for all practical purposes, shall amount to little. You may stand so obstinately in the attitude of a hearer, as to lose all the knowledge and advantage that accrues from doing. You may cherish so many weak thoughts, and foster so many pernicious prejudices; and may render religion a thing pertaining so much to party, and sect, and ceremony, and self-aggrandisement, as to make the Christian profession ridiculous in the eyes of the world. By such conduct you are not honoring God—you are taking his name in vain. On the contrary you may deal so candidly with divine things, you may give them so warm a place in your heart, you may so consistently follow speculation into action, you may comport yourself so singly, so reasonably, in so honourable a manner, as to obtain the richest results within your own soul, and to make godliness seem most respectable to the view of all who come within your reach. Debate the alternative, for it is an affair of deep import in which of these paths you conclude to walk. So to consider the enactment is to extract from it a truer meaning than when it is understood as telling men to beware how they speak of God, without defining how they are to feel to God. To the regenerate man it is comparatively unnecessary that he should be told that he should mention the divine name with reverence. To the unregenerate man it is unimportant that he should be told how to speak,

since speak as he will he does not *think* justly. Here as elsewhere it is a profitable exchange to take the doctrine in place of the symbol.

IV. "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy," &c. This Commandment is of no more intrinsic importance than any of the others. It has been exaggerated beyond its own just dimensions, and during a course of ages has been practically dealt with as if it were the one great Commandment of the Law. Because of the very prominent position which it has been made to occupy, we shall give it a place by itself, and shall reserve our remarks upon it for a separate chapter.

V. "Honour thy father and thy mother," &c. The type is apparent in this instance, likewise. The spiritual mind perceives that an object is presented which must conceal something else beneath it; for this reason, that when taken in the letter, it does not express a coherent thought. Neither the command, nor the promise attached to it, expresses a reasonable idea when viewed in the literal form. The mind becomes aware that there must be a profounder thought concealed beneath the surface, because the superficial idea is scarcely rational. In saying this, we do not mean to state that there never was any meaning in the type. We believe that at the time of its enactment, it was so contrived as to be locally correct.—But what we mean to assert is, that it will not bear to be regarded as a Catholic institution in its literal sense. It is not true that it is the duty of all men under all circumstances, to honour their parents. To assert the contrary is to impose a rule which leads to immediate and obvious absurdity. A man in virtue of this principle, becomes invested with a sacred character. Because he has propagated his species, he is to be regarded with religious respect. Because he has obeyed an appetite, he is straight-

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way invested with honour. To take this precept as the letter presents it, would be to make the bible instrumental in perpetuating the worst forms of vice. It authorises each parent to inculcate his own peculiar wicked propensities upon his offspring. It makes it wrong for them to refuse to receive the parental instruction whatever be the results to which it would conduct. Neither is it at all correct to say that there is a necessary connection between the command and the promise. It is futile to pretend that they stand to one another as cause and effect. A man might observe the precept without reaping the reward. A man might violate the precept and have the promise in all its fulness. The history of any country, of any people, of any province, of any parish, will make this plain enough. Who would dream of viewing each octagenarian as a notable example of the force of the fifth commandment? Who would form so shallow a view of the worth of human life, as to consider extreme old age a thing so desirable that God associates it with the keeping of his commandment? Surveyed in the letter this precept enjoins a line of conduct that would be profitable neither to the parent nor to the child. It inculcates that which would sanction any amount of immorality in the one, any degree of wicked servility in the other. There are no habits of thought and action that might not be handed down from generation to generation on the plea which this precept seems to afford. On the other hand there is no pretext on which it can be alleged that the promise follows the practice. The attempt to establish a link of connection between them, is fantastic. The attempt to prove invariable connection between the two, would argue monomania on the part of him who made it. The ordinance seems to require a mode of action that is not reasonable—it appears to recommend it by a promise that is not realised. These

things tell us to look elsewhere for the true meaning.— They apprise us that under the surface there lies the thought which must be the principal and the catholic thought. When the attention is directed to other parts of Scripture, this opinion receives much accession of force. Deriving your argument from statements that occur in all quarters, there is no difficulty in fixing the meaning of the term. Farther testimonies come in from every direction, to give assurance that the evangelical sense of the word has respect to the Father of our spirits, to that Being who styles Himself the everlasting Father—who enjoins us to address Him as our Father in heaven, and who, in the definition of the persons of the Godhead, places himself in the forefront, under the name of the Father. There can be no doubt that this is not only a title, but one of the most frequent titles of Jehovah. There can be as little question that the highest possible meaning is put upon this commandment, when it is made to set forth our duty to the Most High. It seems almost equally clear that the loftiest sense of any portion of Scripture, is that which is to be taken when Scripture is viewed as a criterion of doctrine.— Moreover, that men should honour their father in this sense, brings out a result which is not occasionally, but universally wholesome. Circumstances may frequently occur, in which to honour and obey an earthly father, would lead to consequences that were pernicious and ungodly. Circumstances can never occur, in which reverence to the Deity can lead to any other results but those which are honest, lovely, and of good report. Still further, obedience to this enactment in a spiritual acceptance, would inevitably draw the promise along with it. In this sense, there never could be any divorce between the order and the promise by which it is sanctioned. The religious man honouring his Creator at the promptings of the new nature.

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which he received through conversion, and becoming
 thereby a certain heir of life eternal, would exhibit inevitable
 connexion between the commandment and the reward. As
 a difficulty in the way of this interpretation, it will occur
 to some that the *mother* is mentioned here as well as the
 father. We admit that this is an unexplored type. We
 acknowledge that we are not aware of any attempt that
 has been made to give to the word *mother* a sense different
 from that which it literally bears. To an inquiring mind,
 however, this objection would not amount to much. It
 would carry with it only that amount of weight which an
 enlightened man attaches to the opinion of former ages.
 It may be argued in reply to such supposed objections that
 Scripture supplies a sense for the term *mother* which in
 the present instance appears much less liable to animad-
 version than the superficial meaning. It is one of the best
 known facts in theology that Scripture is wont to desig-
 nate the religious commonwealth by the name of the *bride*
 or *wife* of the redeemer. This is a common and it is an
 admitted figure. With express reference to this image
 each of the sacred writers in succession warns his country-
 men against the sin of adultery, or censures them because
 they are continually falling into the crime. There is not
 a more frequent thought than this in the vocabulary of
 scripture doctrine. In the book of the Proverbs whilst
 there is a wicked woman who occupies a conspicuous place
 and whose influence is represented as exceedingly baneful,
 there is a good woman who is fully described, who is held
 up to notice as exercising many excellent functions, and
 who is portrayed as standing in very honourable relation
 to her husband and her children. There can be small
 doubt that this personage is carried forward into the song
 of Solomon, and that her feelings and qualities engross a
 large portion of that book. There can be no doubt this

bride, spouse, or virtuous woman is mentioned by the different prophets. She is as commonly, and as notably referred to in the discourses and parables of our Lord. Each of the writers of the Epistles makes mention of this personage. Jerusalem is spoken of as "*the mother of us all.*" In addition to the passages that are commonly alleged in support of this idea, we would specify the elect lady spoken of by John; and if this opinion be just, the idea must be allowed to become more luminous and broad as revelation advances in its course. In the concluding book of Scripture, this woman stands prominently forward. She is seen clothed with the sun, and having the moon beneath her feet. She is beheld coming down from heaven to meet her husband. Her name occurs amongst the last of the addresses which round off the volume. The spirit and the *bride* say come. When the subject is considered apart from Scripture, on its own merits, and from a point of simple observation, a similar conclusion is come at. Reason and experience tell us that there is a system of second causes, that God communicates with the Churches through human agents, that there is not only Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but visible channels through which these unseen beings correspond with men. There is the written word: there is that series of means by which its oracles are transmitted down, expounded and applied. It may be said without profanity, that each believer is the product of all this—he is the result of the first cause and the second cause combined. We admit that it is not of necessity that this distinction should be made. We allow that there is a high point of observation, seen from which the two things coincide and become but one. We own that it is quite in the spirit of Scripture to speak of both parts of the process as immediately from God. But we likewise maintain that it is possible to draw a line, that the Bible frequently

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does so, and that when the line *is* drawn, the Christian, like the Lord Jesus himself, may be regarded as the offspring of two parents—the one human, the other divine.

Viewed in this light, the Commandment gives forth the following lesson. It is the duty of the believer to reverence the sources from which he received life: to adore the decree, the divine sacrifice, and the heavenly teaching that have made him what he is: to love those holy men who have been the means under God, of bringing the kingdom to its present condition. We admit that it is scarcely possible so to state this thought as that there shall not be imminent danger of abuse. We allow that in every past period, this idea has been far more generally made subservient to evil than to good. Still, with all this risk about it, we consider it eminently preferable to the present carnal views entertained in regard to this statute.—The believer honouring those purposes by which his existence was determined: honouring also those purposes in their secondary form,—that is to say, in all those agencies that make up effectual calling,—prosecuting these sentiments forth to their proper results, will thereby become one of that family, who in virtue of an imperishable principle infused into them, shall dwell for ever in the good land, of which Canaan was the symbol. By this substitution, a fixed duty is procured instead of a sliding scale,—a catholic instead of a partial truth is obtained. A line of conduct which must always profit, and a promise which must ever hold good, is procured instead of a course of action which will not always lead to good results, and a promise which has no necessary relation to the duty which it follows. And so is it in each instance. In adopting the spiritual in place of the literal idea, there is in each case a similar gain. In each instance a slavish ordinance is replaced by a free thought, a local is exchanged

for a broad and philosophical institute, a superficial is removed by a deep thought, that which is of doubtful goodness is exchanged for that whose excellence is beyond dispute.

VI. "Thou shalt not kill," &c. Most minds would consider that this enactment can bear no other sense than that which is already associated with it. It would be hard to displace the customary view from the mind even of the pious. It appears to fulfil so plain and so useful an object on its present footing. Its locality in the Old Testament, its position in reference to the other institutes among which it occurs cause us to believe, that the apparent is not the highest meaning, even before we have subjected it to analysis. When we leave this remoter ground, and come closer up to it, the reasons augment, and our view of the case looks more natural. It then presents itself among other considerations: can a man properly be said to obey this precept who commits no violence upon the bodies of his fellow beings, can he be said to break it when he sheds human blood, is this the sense that a spiritual critic would bring back from a wide survey of the bible: above all, is it the high sense that we are entitled to expect in a summary such as this, which is supposed to comprehend all the principles of ethics? The fair reply would seem to be in the negative. In the philosophic and real view of the matter, *he* does not kill who mars the body of his fellow man. He dissolves a connection, but he does not destroy a principle. He alters the form and appearance of things, he does not affect their essence. He causes the soul to alter its relation to matter, but he does not necessarily affect the soul itself. We allow that this, common with the other institutes, has a local and carnal meaning. We admit that this was the sense which it was intended in general to convey to the men of the olden times.

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What we contend for is, that this particular sense is not to be received as the universal and perpetual,—that this superficial is not to be taken as the high and spiritual meaning. That which we derive from probability and reason scripture confirms. In one of its earliest chapters it defines the question. Adam is informed that in the day that he eats of the forbidden fruit he shall surely *die*. The sequel shows what was meant by this warning. It was not realised in a carnal sense. His body did not at the moment of his sin see corruption. The effect was upon the *soul*. The death decreed consisted in a change in the character and destiny of the immortal spirit. It expressed the degradation and the punishment which the fall entailed upon it; when this is the meaning affixed to death, at such an early period, and on an occasion so momentous, is it not the likelihood that it will be retained throughout? When at the time that the event occurred which brought ruin upon the soul, that fact is distinguished by the term death, is it not probable that in other instances when the soul is concerned similar expressions will be employed? No one who is acquainted with the sacred writings can dispute but that this happens. We maintain that it is quite an usual thing. The prophets particularly are in the habit of using this mode of speech throughout their writings. At one time they enjoin the people to wash themselves free of the blood with which they are stained. At another they announce the judgments that are to befall them because of the murders with which they are polluted. Those who are familiar with scripture will remember that passages of this sort are among its ordinary things. They will also recollect that they occur in such a connection so frequent as to render it impossible to interpret them in any other sense than as denouncing the guilt which attaches to him who destroys souls. When it is borne in mind that such

scriptures generally stand associated with priests, shepherds or teachers of religion,—that they occur commonly where charges are brought against the leaders of the people for corrupting the doctrine,—how can it be doubted that the murder alledged, is of that deep essential sort which alone deserves the name? Further, in a code which was so obviously designed to be a summary of all that is moral, we believe that no statement would occur that was not primary. If we take the spiritual view of this enactment, we render it at once a leading principle. If we take the literal sense, we make it only a secondary point. In the one case, the man is called upon to do no injury to his own soul, or to those of his fellow men. To comply with this, is to solve the grand problem. To keep this law, is to learn the value of the soul. To obey this precept, is to lay hold upon the true faith. In the other case the results are very different. The man beholds an ordinance confronting him in which he is forbidden to shed blood. If he be a man of violent passions, he is not able to keep the ordinance. If he be a person of calm nature, he finds holiness in abstaining from the infraction of the precept. The one man is not restrained from evil, the other is encouraged to self-righteousness. Very opposite are the effects that accrue from the higher meaning. The man is driven back upon the thought, that to be careless of eternal life, is to be guilty of murder. Impressed with this idea the care of his soul becomes to him the one great concern. He values the eternal well-being of others in proportion as he becomes interested in his own. Even if the statute does not lead to those evangelical consequences it does no harm, it breeds no admiration of self, it helps to foster no feeling of conscious strength. It is either the savour of life unto life, or the savour of death unto death. In either instance the result is wholesome. To attach the high sense to this enact-

ment, is that which agrees with philosophy, which the best harmonises with the meaning of Scripture, which seems above all dispute to ensure the most beneficial effects.

VII. "Thou shalt not commit Adultery." Of all the ten, this is the one which it is the most easy to reconcile with the figurative, or spiritual sense. Of them all, this is the one which the religious would the most readily hand over to us as coinciding with the view which we advocate. Scripture has so much in this way. It makes such frequent use of this image. From Exodus to the end of the New Testament, fornication is the most habitual term that is used to denote the sin of forsaking the true God, and worshipping idols. It is the constant figure. It is employed in every variety of manner. It is alluded to—it is expressly stated, or it is drawn out into long dramatic passages. God as a husband, recalls to the guilty spouse the abject condition in which he found her at the first. He reminds her of the long continued tenderness which he had shewn towards her, and of the multitude of instances in which she had proved herself untrue to him. Dwelling upon the idea, he threatens that he will repudiate the unfaithful woman, and that he will espouse another. Passages of this sort are of common occurrence in the Bible. They belong to its standing thoughts. At the last, when the kingdom of wickedness is brought to an end, it is with an eye to this idea that the description is drawn up. The old whore with her lovers, Babylon along with those who drank of the cup of her sorceries and fornications, is consigned to destruction. Thus we find the rise, progress, consummation and final doom of false religion exhibited by means of this symbol. So much is this the case, that to the man well acquainted with holy writ, it ceases to be a figure, and seems to him rather to be literally correct. Should it be asked what profit there is

in associating a mystical sense with the Commandment, we answer that it is the same in degree and kind as that which arises from giving a spiritual meaning to the other precepts. In its apparent and superficial aspect, it is not cardinal—it does not accomplish an object of primary force. It gives out that it is contrary to the Divine Will that a man should commit adultery. In so doing, it may restrain those of gentle natures from the sin; but in restraining them, it will not exert a religious action. It will do so by the influence of pressure *from without*, and not at the instigation of principle *from within*. It will assist men in falling into that confusion of ideas into which they are so prone to slide, by which constrained morality becomes to them equivalent with vital godliness. The passionate man will break through the restraint; the mild person will make religion of his compliance. The one will not be held in, the other will believe himself pure because he is able to obey. Those who are conversant with human nature, must be familiar with these two lines of conduct. One class is seen composed of those who do not regard this precept, and who, owing to the carnal view that is taken of it, seem stung into a greater excess of sensuality than they might be supposed to be guilty of were they ignorant of the existence of the statute. The other consists of those who, by the aid of a lymphatic character, or the influence of strong prudential motives, learn to acquiesce: and on the ground of their conformity, erect a hard and heartless self-righteousness, that is quite as nauseous as the profligacy of the former. In neither instance is the result wholesome, because in neither does it conduct to God. On the other hand, when the precept is read in the mystical sense, a good effect is within the range of likelihood. A man in this case learns from the figure that it becomes him to be reconciled, or married to his Maker. The bold

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and faithful metaphor arouses him, by apprising him that it is obscene and lewd in him to stand in any other relation than that of a faithful spouse to his God. He is led to reflection by the idea, and if it once takes hold on him, he is kept in this state all his life long. The law of the Lord reaching his soul in this its spiritual intent, he perceives it, like the psalmist, to be perfect, and it converts him. It does more than this. It not only begins, but it helps to carry on the good work. It approves itself profitable not merely for correction, but also for instruction in righteousness. The person who is once brought under its power, feels himself throughout his career perpetually warned by a lively metaphor to comport himself as a chaste and faithful wife toward her husband.

There is yet another reason why we consider that the statute is to be understood in a spiritual sense. In the literal form, it does not express a complete thought. It interdicts one shade of the crime, it does not interdict all. It specifies one branch, but it does not lay its axe at the root of the tree. It forbids licentious conduct where the marriage tie exists, but it says nothing of those cases that occur where the tie is not. It requires that unwarrantable liberties be taken with it before it can be supposed that it can be made to extend to all the degrees. In the carnal shape, it is evidently an incomplete statute. It does not forbid every sort of the sin at which it seems pointed. By no fair construction can it be drawn out to this extent.—To take it in its literal aspect, and then to pretend that it can be rendered much wider than the letter, is to attempt to make it two things at once. In the spiritual phasis, there are no such obstacles. It then expresses a complete thought. It then requires no straining to make it shut in all which it seems designed to include. In this sense, it tells a man to deal faithfully with the Lord his God. It

tells him this in a manner, which, if the injunction be attended to, will lead not only to the performance of an outward act, but to the insertion of the divine life. And it does this in a manner that seems agreeable to the character of a code which is supposed to comprehend all the principles of what is moral or divine. It may be alledged that on this construction there is no statute in the decalogue directed against licentious vices. Is this really an objection? Was such a statute to be looked for in such a place? Is it not much more in accordance with a code which is supposed to be catholic, to read all its articles in such a manner as to make them cardinal and primary in their import? By taking the mystical sense, we have a complete instead of a fractional idea; we have a profound in place of a superficial thought; we have a statute directly calculated to plant conversion in lieu of one that could only take cognizance of outward conduct.

VIII. "Thou shalt not steal." If this institute stood alone,—if it stood in a different vicinity, we should probably read it in its apparent sense. But it is found in a volume, which in the general men allow to be symbolic,—it occurs in a code which contains other statutes that are obviously double in their intention; therefore, because of these reasons, and previous to the analysis of the precept itself, the probability is that it is of the same substance. Such a scripture as the following, might be regarded as explaining the idea which we think should be associated with the Eighth Commandment. "Will a man rob God? "yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, wherein have we "robbed thee? In tithes and offerings, ye are cursed with "a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there "may be meat in mine house, and prove me now here- "with, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the

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“ windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that
 “ there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I
 “ will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall
 “ not destroy the fruits of your ground : neither shall your
 “ vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the
 “ Lord of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed :
 “ for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of
 “ hosts.”—MAL. III. 8—13.

It is well known that other passages of a similar complex-
 ion occur often in the Bible. In these, the people and their
 teachers are reprov'd for their sins. They are blamed for the
 blood which they shed, and the thefts of which they are guilty.
 And these charges are brought against them in circum-
 stances that make it quite plain that it is not what men call
 theft and murder that is the subject of blame. So then it is
 an usual thing for Scripture to designate men as robbers
 when it is certain that they have not been plundering the
 property of their fellow men. Instances abound wherein
 they are accused of fraud and theft in situations where God
 only is concerned. This fortifies the argument—this en-
 hances the probability that it is spiritual theft that forms
 the capital thought in the present example. When we
 come still closer up to the question, it may be advanced
 in further confirmation of this view, that whatever we may
 think of the decalogue, we must regard it as an encyclo-
 pedia or complete circle. But if it be accepted for this
 much, if it be allowed to comprehend all saving knowledge
 in ten statutes, each of these must be primary, each of
 them must present a truth in its most abstract, most tran-
 scendental, most highly concentrated form. If this is not
 the case how can ten include all doctrine? If they are
 not sublimated, or distilled, or generalised up to their
 highest point, how can they be the principles of all other
 things? But if this eighth enactment means merely what

may be gathered from the surface, it is not a truth in its most rarified shape. It is then simply a common moral precept that will express no more than any other admonition that has regard to a particular branch of external conduct. Instead of ranking as one of ten, it will in that case stand in a parallel line with almost any other precept that might be named. On the other hand, if the mystical sense be taken; and if the statute be understood to say that a man must not rob God, its range becomes greater in a degree that is not easily appreciated. Instead of merely pointing a censure at one infraction of man's duty to his neighbour, it is made by this substitution to express the fitness that there is that we should maintain thorough probity in all our relations to the Most High. In this view, it denotes a great deal more, and it has regard to things much more intimate and lofty. In this sense, it expresses all that is contained in keeping the heart with all diligence, all that is implied in the phrase speaking the truth in the heart, and probably a great deal of what is meant in the comprehensive saying, which commands us to love the Lord with our whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Understood in its superficial import, its scope is limited, and its effect is not thorough. It takes cognizance of but one branch, and even in this limited extent, it has not the force to compel obedience. It may induce a man of a very open, calm, prudent, or uncovetous temper to abstain from the sin, and it may lead him to think that in refraining he is moral or holy. In this case, the good that it does is half counterbalanced by the evil that it sanctions. Where the disposition is greedy or careless, it has not even this influence. In this latter case the passion that incites is stronger than the check that seeks to repel. When the spiritual meaning is adopted one feels that he is in possession of a high thought that is

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worthy to rate as one of ten. To receive it, will certainly ensure compliance with all that is contained in the external idea; for it cannot be doubted that the man who will not rob God, will not plunder his fellow man. But it will carry with it a great deal more than this. It will walk into the interior of the heart, and will enjoin upon it a fairness of thought and feeling that must tell powerfully upon the whole life. In doing this it will be exerting a sanctifying influence, instead of encouraging men to suppose that they have a righteousness of their own. Religion, with this precept received as a very important part of its apparatus, would begin to esteem honesty. It would be estimated as one of ten things. The whole world knows that it has never yet enjoyed this degree of credit. All men are aware that it has been usual to consider it as a plant of a terrestrial nature. It is matter of notoriety that the term is rarely used by religionists, and that when employed it is generally in cases when the design is to mask the evil intent more completely. A change of opinion in regard to this one statute would do much to alter all this. Men would find it hard to escape from the strong argument that would be raised in favour of integrity of soul. The deity gives us all the principles of morality in a code of ten articles. But one of these treats of probity, it must therefore be a cardinal virtue. Men who at present easily escape from such conclusions and who build up extensive systems in which truth in the spirit scarcely has a place, would find it necessary to open their categories and admit a new statute. Much of the duplicity that prevails at present may be ascribed to ignorance. Men really have not well defined ideas as to what integrity means in religion. If the eighth commandment were opened up, and applied in what we believe to be its spiritual import, God would be seen to give so clear a deliverance on this article, as to leave fraud without excuse.

IX. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." This statute gives forth the same effects that we have observed in those which precede it. It declares the necessity that there is that we should have recourse to a spiritual meaning, by revealing the fact that the literal sense is not canonical. The exact idea which it gives out, is that God forbids false testimony against our *neighbour*. The inference which it seems to allow, is, that here are, or may be, cases in which false witness may be permitted. In a literal sense, the term our neighbour comprehends but a limited number of individuals. On the strictest view, it includes only those who reside at a very moderate distance from our dwelling. By the help of some straining, it may be made to refer to those who are connected with us by the ties of blood. With a little more latitude it may be forced to comprehend all those of our nation. By no construction consistent with literality can it be made to include more than a very small part of mankind. Now this produces an idea which is not catholic, or even moral. According to this statute, a mere accident of situation gives the character to an action. Falsity assumes a moral or an immoral complexion, in virtue of circumstances of a kind quite adventitious. A man is led to regard himself as good or bad, not according to the intrinsic quality of his conduct, but according to the degree of latitude of the person with whom he had to do. There ought to be something more universal than this.—The statute understood in its very letter, shews discrepancy, is of private interpretation, and is contradicted by other passages of Scripture. We have the solution in more than one of those passages, wherein our Lord expounds the law, thus: Matt. V. 43.—"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies. bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate

"you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and
 "persecute you; That ye may be the children of your fa-
 "ther which is in heaven; for he maketh his sun to rise
 "on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the
 "just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love
 "you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans
 "the same! And if ye salute your brethren only, what
 "do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?
 "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your father which is
 "in heaven is perfect!" In these words, our Lord ad-
 mits the inference to which we point. He allows that
 men were wont to derive from the letter of the law the dis-
 tinction of enemy and neighbour. He does not say, or
 allow us to suppose that it was the *object* of the law to
 erect this distinction; but he does admit that things were
 so arranged as that this conclusion was that at which men
 habitually arrived,—that which they gathered from the
 surface. The scope of his language is to the effect that a
 deeper and larger meaning is to be found,—that while the
 letter of the enactments seemed to justify such narrow dis-
 tinctions, their spirit marks out a very different line of
 conduct. We do injustice to the Mosaic economy and to
 God, when we derive from the comments of Jesus the doc-
 trine, that there is essential variance between the Old Tes-
 tament and the New. The difference is in the form, the
 appearance, and not in the essence. When Messiah brings
 out a thought contrary to that which men derived from
 the Law of Moses, he does not erect a new statute—he
 shews the meaning of the old. In these cases, he appends
 his gloss, he withdraws the veil, he puts aside the inte-
 gulements, he exhibits the difference between the letter and
 the spirit of the commandment. In another passage, our
 Lord sheds additional light upon this statute. A Lawyer
 takes advantage of the ambiguity of terms to put the ques-

tion, but who is our neighbour? The question is answered by a tale. The story of the Good Samaritan is related; and the moral is extracted from it, that it becomes us to consider that the law of love demands that we should look upon all mankind as standing to us in this relation, and that they never have so strong a claim upon us as when there is something in their situation that renders them objects of compassion. In this scripture, also, Jesus may be regarded as freeing this statute from doubt, as settling the canonical meaning of the word neighbour. This commandment, then, betrays the same quality that we found in those which precede it. Its letter kills. It warrants a distinction which is not moral. It justifies a doctrine that teaches us to divide mankind into two classes. It induced the Jewish people to commit this error, it would lead us, if we received it in the letter, to be guilty of the same fault. It has a higher sense, which is holy, just, and good, and which tallies with all scripture. That higher meaning is to be procured by comparing it with other parts of the Bible. But that which admits of a higher signification, is not in its highest form. That which contains error on the surface, must be reconciled with what is divine, by penetrating to the subsoil. That which is capable of further distillation, is not brought up to its purest state. An enactment is not properly spiritual until it exists in that form which cannot be exalted.

X. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house," &c. It seems to us probable that the preceding statute explains this,—that the points in which they are figurative are alike in both. If this judgment be sound, the typicality of each consists in the way in which the term *neighbour* is employed. As the ninth implies that false witness is only wrong when it points at our neighbour, so the tenth appears to say that covetousness is criminal only when:

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shews itself under the same conditions. The dead letter would allow a man to conclude that he was justifiable in slandering the character and coveting the property of those who were not his neighbours. To arrive at a view broader and truer, one must find the philosophy or spirit of the statute. By adopting this course we discover in both these instances that other parts of Revelation extend the meaning of the word neighbour, and render it coextensive with the human race. Thus an enactment from being or seeming local and conventional, is converted so as to become catholic and spiritual. It appears to us more than likely that the tenth commandment may be figurative to an extent beyond that which we have stated. It will be sufficient for our purpose that it be admitted to be so in the degree which we have specified. That it is so in this amount we regard as too obvious to require a lengthened proof.

To recapitulate then what we have advanced on the subject of the decalogue, it is our opinion that some of the capital errors of the churches arise out of the circumstance that this code is received by them in its superficial and literal sense. That it is susceptible of a more lofty interpretation, we consider to be at once an evident and an important fact. It is rendered probable by the position which it occupies in the midst of a system of five books that were set forth by one man, that appear to be homogeneous in their nature, that are spoken of under one name, that are described as if they were of one texture. It is further recommended to our minds in this light by the fact that it is expressly affirmed to be spiritual, and that proceeding on this definition, Christ and his Apostles, in different instances, deal with its articles as though they needed exposition, and settle those higher meanings that they symbolise and shadow forth. Above all, it identifies itself to the mind as a spiritual system when its several

statutes are criticised, and faithfully inspected. We then become aware that we have been under a considerable delusion in regard to this code. We perceive that the Church has already, and without avowal, spiritualised more than one of the articles. We remark that its texture is so obviously figurative, that the very sects which incorporate it in their standards in its literal version, have found it necessary in practice to depart from their own theory, and to interpret it with a considerable degree of latitude. Pursuing the argument from analogy, we derive the inference, as are these two or three statutes which the church already understands in the mystical sense, so must the rest be. Reducing this dogma to practice we find that there is not one of all the ten but corresponds with it. Each in its turn looms out and shows that there is a larger thought concealed beneath the letter. We cannot imagine a series of general and special arguments that form a more connected chain than those which declare the ten commandments to be spiritual in their scope. We are sure that the day cannot be far distant when the sincere portion of the churches will perceive and avow this. What danger or evil can accrue from the change of opinion? In every other direction it has been found that to discover the antitype to any symbol, has been to augment the capital—has been to enlarge the circle of the doctrine, and ethics of the church. So will it be in this case. Indeed it seems likely that the conversion would have taken place, perhaps long before this, but for one fact. In the centre of the code there stands a day, a ceremony, an ordinance. To confess the system to be allegorical was to lose this piece of scaffolding and police. We shall say but that the march of sentiment may have been greatly retarded by this lion in the path?

CHAPTER IV.

THE SABBATH.

"There remaineth therefore, a rest (The keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God."—HEB. IV. 9.

A fact which is level to the capacity of a whole people, is a fact which it seems almost hopeless to resist, for in such a case the objections consist of sentiments rather than of reasons. A man of a logical mind, would consider it a hard matter by dint of pure reason, to persuade the inhabitants of the South Sea Islands not to tattoo their skins. He would find that his most cogent arguments fell with ludicrous weakness upon the strong entrenchments of inclination and custom. A man who wishes to explode a thought that has taken possession of all classes, must allow a long time to argument, to work its way through the mass. After all it will not be reasoning at the last that will effect the change. Argument will convince a few of the most accurate thinkers, the others will abandon their opinion because of the authority of these men of intellect, whom they are in the habit of blindly following. As far as the mass is concerned, a man might starve, or be knocked on the head a hundred times over before he could produce any change on their sentiments in regard to things to which they were familiarized and attached by custom.—From the days of Jesus Christ downwards, we see this circumstance affording great advantage to the interested Pharisees who lead the people. They step in between the teacher of new truths and the mindless rabble. They contrive to persuade them that the new idea strikes at the root of some strong interest, some dearly cherished habit. The poison does its work, and the infuriated multitude

shews itself as unreasonable and as dangerous as the exasperated wild beast in the madness of its onset. When we consider how large a proportion of every community consists of mere rabble, we are surprised to find that knowledge and truth have made the progress that we perceive them to have made. When the providence of God is deducted from the problem, we can imagine no stronger contrast than that which exists between the weapon and the power to be overcome, in contests of opinion. A weak man springs up in some village or corner of a country, and he tells his fellow citizens that he has discovered a truth. Here is the weapon or instrument. On the other hand, persons clothed with power, vested with authority, furnished with wealth, in possession of the prestige which custom and superstition supply, take advantage of every circumstance; distort facts in most plausible and subtle methods; appeal to the dirtiest passions of low men, and low women, and manage to circulate the delusion through the whole land, that the idea which claims attention is just that which is the most hostile to the peculiar inclination of each one of all the inhabitants. The merchant is given to understand that it will affect the interests of trade: the farmer is led to believe that it will throw agriculture back; the devotee is lashed into fury by being adroitly convinced of the fatal blasphemy that lurks in the new thought—passions even lower and baser than these are put in motion, and all under the colour of patriotism, religion, and good morals. This is the resistance to be overcome. The forces are so very unequal, as to render it matter of marvel how the victory should ever, in any instance, be on the side of the truth. The wonder becomes less when we take into consideration a principle that generally enters where there are great changes in public sentiments. God renews the miracle which he performed at

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Babel. He divides their tongues. He rends the opposing phalanx by introducing some new passion. He causes "the earth to help the woman." He compels some worldly influence to believe that its own mercenary views will be promoted by means of the new idea. Thus Greek meets Greek, and that the truth of God may not be stifled, Satan's kingdom is divided against itself.

When we take a partial view of vast revolutions in human affairs, we are disposed to refer the great events to something portentous and preternatural in the courage, the talent and the piety of the chief agents. More minute inquiry convinces us that these were not the only, that they were not even principal elements. It was courage, ability and virtue that ventured to obtrude the new thoughts upon the attention of mankind. It was revenge, and cupidity, and lust, and love of novelty, that allowed the thoughts to live, and that forced for them a way into the great unthinking masses of human society. The reformation spread in Germany not merely because the new opinions were intrinsically superior to the old, but because that country had long felt jealous that a foreign power should exercise authority in all matters of religion. It gained entrance into England not so much because Luther's homilies were excellent in point of piety and argument, as that Henry found in the new state of things a means by which to wed the woman of his choice, and to gratify his love of absolute power. It prospered in Scotland not simply on account of the sterling qualities of Knox, and the other reformers, but because of this other fact that there were vast domains in possession of the Popish Church, and that the alienation of these from their original owners, appealed powerfully to the cupidity of the nobles. This peculiarity, connected with religious changes, has been perceived, but not in its full magnitude. The proper amount of influence

has not been attributed to it. Men have been afraid to suppose, or to admit that it entered so largely into transactions which it is fashionable to believe moved purely upon the pivots of principle and piety. It is very necessary, however, that the whole truth should be disclosed in this question. It is better that we should see things as they are, than that we should conjure up unreal combinations, and sport ourselves with our own deceivings. To see through the mechanism of these movements, to discern in what degree they grew out of high principle, and in what extent they were the product of accident and worldliness, is to give attention to questions of moment. As a result of such analysis, a man might learn to reckon in the very lowest degree upon any thing pure or lofty, as the instruments by which his views were to be advanced. He might learn, therefore, in no measure to commit his cause into the hands of men; and when he canvassed the subject, how much his ideas were to be propelled forward by the worst passions of human nature, he might find much cause to wonder at the wisdom which can extract so much good out of evil. The opinion will, without question, yet prevail on the earth, that the Sabbath of the new economy is a *doctrine*, and not a *day*; but by what means will it gain credit; in how few instances will it be the suggestion of true faith, how often will it be regarded as a mere intellectual dogma, how frequently will it be embraced at the prompting of mere authority, at the instigation of the mindless influence which teaches one man to imitate another! One circumstance which in every age of the church has led to an exorbitant amount of attention to topics of an external and ceremonial nature is the fact, that they furnish the principal means by which one man in things pertaining to religion can exercise influence over his fellows. No doubt there are other methods by which this objec-

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can be attained. A man by means of an intellect that
 eminently overtops that of others, may command influence
 and respect. He may compass the same ends by the re-
 putation which attends vast and varied acquirements. He
 may arrive at great name and power by persevering for a
 term of years in a course of undeniable piety and single-
 ness. But all of these roads are arduous—a weak man
 cannot travel along them, a double-minded person would
 wish to come at his object at less expence of time and ef-
 fort. *Ceremonies* put the matter within his reach. It re-
 quires neither talent nor goodness to excel in this depart-
 ment. A person who is only not imbecile, may acquire
 notoriety along this route. A smaller expenditure of men-
 tal and physical labour than will purchase celebrity as a
 dancing master may effect the purpose. Since rites then,
 without talent, learning, or goodness, will procure for a
 man what these other things often fail to compass, since
 they will enable him to seem what he is not, since they
 will earn for him a station in the absence of almost
 every thing else, since they exert a considerable power
 over the minds of all men, and an overwhelming influence
 over all who are unlearned, since they supply a system of
 police by which the most accurate surveillance may be
 maintained over the actions of men, since they furnish a
 guage which is so much more easily managed than any
 other,—for reasons of this sort no warfare is so inveterate
 and acrimonious as that which arises when they are ques-
 tioned. An attack upon doctrines might be forgiven, an
 assault upon ceremonies cannot be borne. It is to im-
 pugn privilege, it is to disfranchise old close boroughs, it
 is to destroy the right of sanctuary, it is to open up the lar-
 king places of coiners and thieves, it is to perpetrate the
 intolerable act of excluding men from the means of acquir-
 ing power, place and the name of sanctity, when they have

no title to them. There is another obvious reason why things ritual are not subjected to narrow scrutiny, and why they are permitted to retain influence long after the time that it might be supposed that society was far enough advanced to see through them,—that reason is, they are convenient not only for those who administer, but for those who are ministered unto. If they profited only the one class, there would be a greater willingness to examine their claims; but answering as they do the purposes of both, helping in both instances to prop up a bad cause, to whiten sepulchres full of dead men's bones, there is a formidable combination in every instance that an attempt is made to canvass their pretensions. If it is very convenient for those who are to teach to be able without mind and without heart to procure station, influence, and the reputation of godliness, it is no less comfortable for those who are to be taught. If a few externals enable the clergyman to have his rank, character and income, they enable the layman also to gratify his own wishes in many ways. The Lawyer and Physician, the Merchant, Soldier and Farmer, without perhaps acknowledging the fact to their own minds, feel that this is an easy road to heaven. It is but to hallow certain days, to practice certain rites, to bow the head on certain occasions. Bodily exercise, if it profits little, does not cost much. It is easier to submit to such small mummeries than to surrender the heart. Hence there are none to question and impugn except that very small class who prefer speculation and truth to solid pudding—who would rather look into the reasons of things than hypocritically go with the multitude who keep holy day. It is no hard matter to convince the greater number that these cavillers are actuated by evil intentions, and that the arguments which they advance are unworthy of notice. By these means the chief force

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of the attack is evaded, and the community moves on under the yoke of ceremonies, which, if the interests of men seemed to them to run in the opposite direction, would be scrutinised with all that scientific precision that is so constantly applied to things terrestrial, and so very rarely to things divine. It requires all this to explain the posture of affairs. It needs all this to render intelligible the strange contrasts that are seen to exist. To survey society in Britain, France, Germany and Holland; to observe the amount of knowledge that prevails in many classes; to perceive the minute and accurate manner in which each subject is measured and analysed, and then to notice those persons who have shewn themselves capable of so much precision in some topics, so incapable of it in certain others; to see them acting like scholars of the nineteenth century in the one case, and like Persian fakeers or monks of the seventh century in the other case; this demands all the explanation that we have adduced. it needs the supposition that there must be interest, and a combination of interests to sustain the big grotesque imposture; it requires that we keep in mind the scripture which says, that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, *deceiving and being deceived*. Other reasons may be adduced in solution of this problem. That the clergy have cause in general to feel an interest in the continuance of ceremonies, that the large number who find their religion in them, are unwilling to let them go,—this accounts for a part of the difficulty, it does not explain the whole. In further elucidation, it may be added that they appeal to minds of all grades. To understand a doctrine, exacts a degree of thought and study that all men do not possess; to feel the influence of a ceremony, requires no more than the use of the eyes. Commending themselves to faculties which all men enjoy, ceremonies are analysed with dif-

ficulty and danger, because of the immense amount of physical influence that can be induced to resent the proposed innovation. Further, they are frequently susceptible of *decoration*, and on this account can be rendered subservient to that love of display which is a strong feeling in most natures. How can we part with that which is so beautiful; how can we suppose that a practice that has excited our admiration so often, can be otherwise than a canon of scripture, such are the emotions that at once rise in arms when the propriety of any old ritual practice is disputed. The influence of the past, the admitted virtues of our forefathers are another strong argument that is always adroitly urged in questions of this kind. Men are reminded that the venerable dead thought favourably of the practice, that minds which we allow to have been of the strongest grasp, set it forth and enforced it; that persons whose purity of purpose has become proverbial, were willing to bleed in its behalf. Volleys of such small musquetry are discharged on each occasion that the authenticity of any ceremony is called in question. Men who shrink from the idea of debating the subject on the ground of truth and reason, often exhibit uncommon skill in dealing with it as a question of sentiment. They shew it up in the most picturesque aspects. They stand over it like Anthony by the dead body of Cæsar, and make most touching appeals to the feelings of the people. They evoke a thousand associations which become eloquence in the way in which they are used. This sort of dexterous sophistry has been employed in each instance that the authority of the Sabbath as a day to be observed has been questioned: and a great deal more of such small and mischievous tactics may be looked for before the question shall finally be set at rest.

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years, the Sabbath is that fact in Theology which has commended itself to the greatest number of minds. Indeed, it may be pronounced to be *the* circumstance connected with religion that has made itself co-extensive with the population of countries. Other points in sacred literature may have arrested the attention of the profound, the acute, or the devout: this fact has had a far wider range, for it has engaged the notice of almost all who have the five senses. Such topics as the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Work of the Spirit, the Inspiration of Scripture, being high, holy and marvellous, have their charms for the studious and the saintly, this subject demands no such peculiar gifts on the part of those who come under its influence. Some questions engross the attention of those who study them during the whole of their lives, and after all the deep matter is not fathomed; to participate in the things connected with the Sabbath, little more is needed but the ordinary sensations. Being thus wide and general in its bearings, it demands all the more loudly that we should examine the effects which it produces upon character, and the claims which it possesses to be considered an ordinance of God. It is a difficult task to pronounce an opinion that shall be just, on the whole, in reference to a question that consists of many parts, and that presents many aspects. To find the middle point and to adhere to it, is, in such a case, a thing that requires great correctness of hand and eye. It is not to be denied that the Sabbath, in every period of the Christian era, has secured one day in seven as a season of rest, for the people of those countries in which it is observed. Even this however, is not a simple equation, even this has several phases. Is it better for body and mind that they should repose each seventh day, or that each day they should undergo no more labour than they are able to sustain during a term of



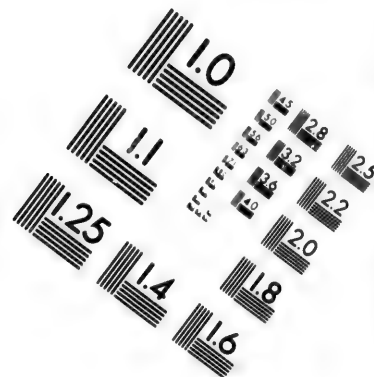
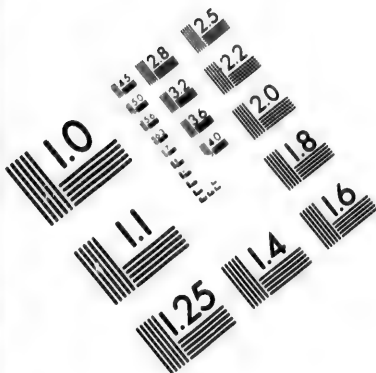
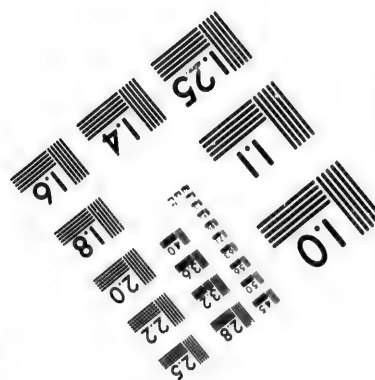
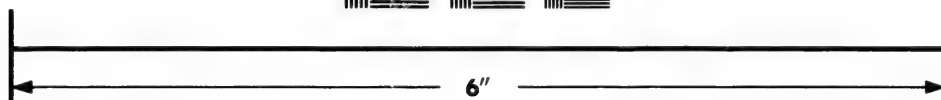
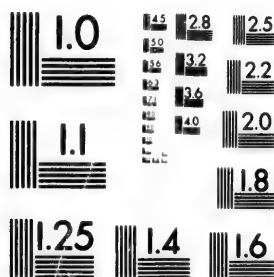


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years? In which case are they the most severely taxed, when they are subjected to toil of an excessive kind for six days, and permitted to take rest on the seventh, or when they are required to labour in a more moderate manner through the whole seven? No one can hesitate as to which side of the dilemma is to be preferred. Now we are not sure but that this is the question with which we ought to deal. Much has been said both in prose and verse as to the beneficence of the institution which secures one day in seven for the repose of the wearied creation. Masters of rhetoric have put together eloquent and beautiful, and apparently holy disquisitions on the subject. But it should be borne in mind that it is as possible to write splendidly upon that which is the creature of our own sentiments as upon that which is founded on reason and eternal truth. Eloquent declamation, whether in the case of the *Paradise Lost*, or any other mere Work of fancy, proves nothing. It may seem to prove much to those soft-minded persons to whom an argument is a very harsh and impertinent thing, and who regard an emotion as the only thing that has a rightful claim upon the intellect. To those on the contrary, who consider that reason should act the part of pioneer, and that conviction should precede feeling, such things go for very little; for winged words, for sentences well constructed, for periods in which the laws of sound and melody have been thoroughly appreciated, and fully realised. Allowing to rhetoric, eloquence and poetry, their own place and merits, it might be contended that men in lauding the benevolence and wisdom of this provision, are prejudging the question. It might be urged that they first assume it to be divine, and then praise its utility. It might be argued that they beg the most important part of the subject, and then proceed to adorn it with their own comments. If a topic be assumed

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to be of heavenly origin without any attempt to prove this much, all the rest will follow. Poets will not be wanting to decorate it with all the lustrous colours of warm fancy, and to those who accept rhyme as argument, and metre as proof, to make it seem doubly divine. Nor will men of science be lacking, who eking out reason with a tolerable amount of imagination, will lay it down with axiomatic precision that there are deep recondite causes in the very essence of things, that render one day in seven just that which constitutes the greatest happiness principle for man and beast. Giving to these things their own value, we still think that there is room for the enquiry whether this arrangement be the best that could be devised. During the middle ages when wars became so frequent as to threaten to depopulate the earth, men were induced to make a covenant which provided that every tenth year they should abstain from feuds. This was a *comparative*, but it could scarcely be termed an *absolute* good. It would certainly have been a greater benefit if they had come to an agreement to live at peace all the time. And perhaps the covenant helped to legitimise and justify the wicked practice. Perhaps the year of repose went to render the warfare that succeeded, more sanguinary and fierce. If we are shut up to the necessity either to labour seven days, in such a manner as that flesh and blood will give way under the pressure, or else to recruit our strength by resting on the seventh day, then the provision which allows us this periodical repose cannot be too highly extolled. But who shall alledge that we are reduced to this dilemma. The true alternative is this, shall we work in a gradual manner every day; or shall we work in so excessive a manner six days, as that the rest of the seventh becomes much more a question of medicine than of religion. Detaining the subject before the mind in this parti-

cular light, the following queries seem to grow naturally out of it. Is not this the manner in which the sabbatical rest has been used? Has it not been made the instrument to provoke a greater amount of toil than would have been gone through had it not existed? Are there any countries on the whole earth in which a larger proportion of the population groans beneath the burden of absolutely killing exertion, than those in which this day is the most stringently observed? Has the observance nothing to do with this state of things? Is it not perhaps because it is counted upon and estimated for more than is fair, that the labour on the other days is so beyond reason? Might not as good an arrangement as now subsists, be introduced without this day of repose? Might not labour be so adjusted as that men might work all the time, and yet feel the pressure much less severely than they do at present? This is a view of the subject that is not often taken—yet many reasons and many statistical facts might be brought forward to shew that it is not devoid of arguments in its favour. The chief topic in any theological question, is whether it be ordained or no. Whenever it can be clearly proved that an enactment is from Heaven, we invariably find that there are substantial benefits connected with its observance. In the present case we believe that this circumstance has not been proved, and therefore we feel all the more sceptical about the benefits that are supposed to be associated with it. Another fact much insisted on, is that this institution greatly helps the cause of religion. If, as we believe it to be, it is a type whose antitype, or fulfilment has taken place, we cannot understand how such an anomaly should promote religion. In what sense can it be said to effect this purpose? Is it because it affords one day for things connected with the teaching of religion? This would be well were there no better provision

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But we contend that as it now stands it interferes with that which is better. We maintain that the letter excludes the view of the philosophy of the institute ; that the notion of formally observing one day, shuts out the idea of dedicating all time ; that the opinion that the keeping a day is the keeping of the Sabbath, comes in the way of the high and holy thought which pronounces it to mean acquiescence in the righteousness of the Saviour, ceasing from our own works as the Lord, after six days of creation, ceased from his. We do not aver that the present thought and practice in regard to this question, is the very worst that could exist ; what we alledge is, that there is room for much better thoughts. It has been stated that the piety of nations has shewn itself commensurate with the degree of regard that they have evinced for this enactment. We suspect that there is some confusion of ideas in this statement. If the fact be assumed that to observe the day be to comply with a divine injunction, of course it follows that those who are obeying the command are acting in a religious manner. It is rather illogical to assume the act to be religious, and then to derive as a conclusion, that those are religious who perform it. In reply to the remark so much reiterated, that great moral results spring out of this observance, we put the questions,—What does the pharasaical character imply ; what is the intrinsic value of that semblance of godliness which adorns the form ; what opinions are to be entertained of the morality of nations, when this mode of character is the *most* prevalent ; what do reason and scripture entitle us to believe is the character of those who consider themselves religious without being so ; in what condition are we to judge that nations are when this state of feeling is that which is most general among them ? The answer which Revelation would give to such queries is, that few things

can be morally worse than this posture of mind and feeling, that it indicates that the wound has been healed slightly, that the wall has been built with untempered mortar, that men have passed into a condition which is in so far worse than a state of nature, that there is no possibility of arousing them out of it. Indeed, Scripture speaks in the most pungent language of this mode of feeling, characterizing it as one of the greatest insults that can be offered to truth. Yet few will deny that this complexion of mind is very common. Many would assent to our remark, were we to declare that it is by far the *most common* element that is to be found in Protestant countries. Every second man at the least, is an example of it. He belongs to a sect; he has a creed that he can conjugate,—without being converted he deems himself a Christian; he cherishes the peculiar idiosyncrasy which nature bestowed upon him; he justifies it by the argument that others do the same; he is licentious, or violent, or artful, or rapacious, or mean, or ambitious; he is one or more of these, without supposing that religion is at all affronted by his cherishing such vices,—almost invariably there is a bend in his demeanour—a wheel within the wheel of his transactions; and so much is this the case, that by a sort of *tare and tret* process, society with one consent calculates upon, and allows for this, in its dealings with all its members. Not only do we find few or no instances of that style of man who is quite single, sincere and thorough. we find the opposite in the tendency which there is to deny that we have any right to look for such a personage. To assert that such men ought to exist, that religion ought to produce them, would be to draw upon yourself the remark from some quarters, that you are very extravagant in your expectations, that you must be very ignorant of the principles of human nature, that things have never been bet-

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er, and never will be: whilst from other directions the observation will come redolent of falsity, that there is too much of the creature in this, that your wishes discover an inclination to set up the righteousness of man, that your opinions denote a very melancholy ignorance of the doctrine of salvation by grace. And so society revolves on its own axis, giving rise to no character of eminent singleness; and lest it should be tempted to adopt a better line of conduct, theology steps in to declare that for a man to advance beyond a certain degree in practical godliness, is highly arrogant, and exposes his motives to the worst constructions. And thus mankind, carried on by their own native depravity, and assisted rather than checked by the theology which obtains among them, are all the while producing forms of character as distorted and bizarre as are the shapes into which their bodies are twisted by the fashions and follies incident to a high stage of refinement. These hybrids begotten between natural corruption and spurious religion, appearing as they do in vast numbers, give full occupation to the pencil of the caricaturist, to the pen of the satirist, and speculator on morals. The calm observer marvels how it can be that a religion which claims to be from heaven, can be the parent of such curious hypocrisy, or such heartless selfishness; and the scoffer exults to see that such ample means are supplied him for circulating his invectives against the truth as it is in Jesus. For effects thus large, there must be causes no less potential; for such an amount of appearance without reality, there must be an efficient reason. It cannot spring up of itself, it could not last long had it nothing beneath which it found shelter. Now in our judgment, *ordinances*, as they are termed, furnish that screen. The Sabbath as it is understood and practised, has its own share in these results. It is said to produce

a solemnising influence, it is described as spreading a mantle of decency over communities, it is spoken of as hallowing and purifying men. These are just the points where our suspicion lights. Men are rendered either better or worse by each influence to which they are subjected. If the Sabbath as now understood positively *converts* them, it does good, if it does less and yet seems to do this much, it injures. Now this, we believe, is the effect which it produces. It brings a something like religion to each man's door. It appears to reduce the requirements of the Bible to the level of what most men are willing to perform. It helps to bring in a mode of feeling which is not spiritual, but which the sentimental think virtuous. It assists a large portion of society in taking on a mode of character, which, once begun, renders it easy for a man through the whole remainder of his career, to lay reason to one side, and in things connected with religion to let shows pass current for realities. It does its part towards initiating men into that system of small hypocrisies which enter largely into the first rudiments of education, and which impart to most minds a cast of falsity both in their theory and in their practice. To be inured from the most tender years each seventh day to adapt the visage to a given model, to repress the smile, to restrain the laugh, the jest, the free movement,—to be habituated thus rapidly to shift the scene, to alter the feeling, to vary the tone, to change the avocation,—to be accustomed to take up such conventional morality, such periodical godliness, must have its own share in leading multitudes to an elasticity of conscience, to a style of character that believes in more respects of things than the true and the false. It may be relied on that some of those anomalies that look so startling, some of those contrasts that seem so inexplicable, some of those contradictions between the creed and the conduct

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that so perplex the observer, arise out of the habit early in-
duced of conjuring up feeling at the word of command,
of getting up religion for one day in seven. But it is near-
ly impossible to write on this subject in such a manner as
to attract any credence, the Church has been so long in
the habit of admiring her own views,—she has been so
much used to call crooked straight, and bitter sweet. A
confusion of ideas prevails that renders it necessary in re-
spect of professors of religion, not only that a subject should
be demonstrated to them, but that new faculties should
be given to them, to enable them to understand the proof.
If those qualities alone were admitted to be virtuous on
which the Bible lays stress,—thus if it was clearly seen
and frankly avowed, that he is righteous who does justly,
who loves mercy, and who walks humbly with his God;
or that the main proof of love to God consists in the keep-
ing of his commandments, if first principles of this sort
were admitted, the road would be short and evident. But
it is not so. Difficulties exist as to what are the elements
of right and wrong. The very circumstances to which
we have been referring as symptoms of the low state of re-
ligion, would be adduced as tokens of the opposite fact by
a great majority of professors. It is not received as an
axiom that piety consists in faith which is of the formation
of the spirit, and in those acts of clear probity, kindness
and self-denial on which the Bible dwells so much. There
is not one of the sects that entertains such a view. It is
understood to consist in great devotion to the party, in
liberal contributions to its projects, in rigid observance of
its days, and rites, and practices. To refer to such fea-
tures as indicative of a want of sincere or deep sentiment,
so far from carrying conviction, would be received as an
incontestable proof of the irreligion of him who brought
the charge. It is not allowed that a solemn carriage

proves nothing. It is not admitted that there is no intrinsic goodness in "bodily exercise." It is not believed that ceremonies have no essential virtue within themselves. The maxim of Mrs. Primrose, "handsome is that handsome does," solid as it appears, would be represented as carnal by the masters of assemblies. The discrepancies between the profession and the life to which we have adverted, could scarcely be rendered intelligible to most minds connected with what is called the visible Church. The vile state of practice to which we have referred could not be substantiated to the teachers of religion, unless it could be shewn to coexist with informality in regard to rites and seasons. The Church is not moral. The world often excels it in practical goodness. The definitions of religion are not settled and agreed in. Scripture puts the question, if the foundations be destroyed what shall the righteous do? This is what we allude to. Primary truths are not established; there is controversy anent the very axioms. It would serve little purpose that we should prove that the Sabbath as it now stands, is productive, not of truth, integrity and love, but of austerity, of will-worship, of duplicity and tyranny; for it would be first necessary to demonstrate that these things are *wrong*. In a period of the world in which a large part of the Church shew itself inclined to revert to Popery by name, and in which every part is steeped and saturated in Popery by fact and feeling, it is no easy matter to clear up these points. Where there is so great a tendency in professors to extol the very modes and practices which we regard as most abominable, it is scarcely practicable so to make a statement as to obtain a hearing. In place, then, of dwelling on the fact that we consider the ideas which obtain in regard to the seventh day, to be productive of what is merely ritual—it may probably be more useful that we should po

need to state the reasons that cause us to believe that a *doctrine* and not a *day*, constitutes the Sabbath of the New Testament.

I. The order given to observe a day, occurs in the Old Testament,—no one will pretend that it is repeated in the New. But it is the general opinion of the churches, that the Old Testament is of such a texture that its contents require to undergo a process before they can assimilate with the doctrines of the New. A large portion of it is already interpreted upon this notion. All the benefits that are derived from it, are procured by following out this principle. It is already acknowledged by large sections of the christian community, that serious evils have arisen when the opposite principle has been adopted. Now it is a great doctrine which asserts in the general that the Old Testament is a mass of type, and that a method of conversion must be employed before it can assume the shape that makes it catholic and evangelical. It quadrates with scientific views, and with the language of the Bible, which speaks of “comparing spiritual things with spiritual,” to follow this plan. It is a powerful confirmation of this general argument, that the expositions of the Old Testament, which we have from the hands of Christ and the Apostles, run in this line, and pursue this system. It is an additional reason in favour of the principle, that all the truly valuable theology of which we are possessed, all that which at once appeals to the feelings of every good man, all that which corresponds with the general doctrines of Scripture, has been procured by this method. It is another strong argument that if there be any dogma that occasions enmity and strife, any one that produces results that are superficial and formal, any one that has led to bigoted, mean, or violent conduct, that case has occurred where this rule has not been followed, where the type has been

preserved in the *raw* state. This last reason has considerable force. It enables us to look back, and to note a variety of instances in which we have abandoned ideas and habits that have sprung up in consequence of taking the letter in place of the spirit. It justifies us in thinking it possible that what has happened so often before, may occur again. Do we in some cases wonder how our ancestors should have taken such Judaical views in religion: do we marvel how they proceeded to build up a hierarchy on the model of that of the Pentateuch, how they had holy places, and vestments, and vessels; do we feel astonished at their notions in reference to pilgrimages, war, retaliation, and the punishment of crimes,—have we departed from their sentiments and conduct in many such matters, then we have done that which might reasonably be done again. According to this position, to adopt new opinions in reference to the Sabbath, would not be a new theory or system, but a simple extension of an old. In reply to these reasons, what arguments does the Bible supply? We can think of none. It contains no statement that formally exempt the decalogue, or the fourth commandment from the general rule. There is no passage in it that says, or seems to say, in so many words, that while the olden economy in the main is of a figurative character there are specific portions of it which are to be understood in their literal and apparent sense. It would need such restricting clauses to stand in opposition to the strong argument that points to the contrary direction. In the absence of such, the reason appears very pointed which concludes, that particular portions should share the fate, and be interpreted in a manner agreeable to that which is notoriously applicable to the general system in which they are found.

2. Another argument would speak in the following

language, you conclude the fourth commandment to be of a figurative import, because it stands in the old testament. there is a closer reason than this, it is one of ten that we can demonstrate to be typical. It might possibly escape from the *general* argument—nothing can seem more unlikely than that it should be an exception to the *special* circumstance. One might hold the very broad principle that the old economy is typical, and at the same time one might fancy that the doctrine might have slight exceptions. But it does not appear reasonable or supposable that in the centre of the old economy there should be a very limited portion, and that while nine parts of this little fragment partook of the character of the volume in which they stand, the tenth part should have a texture of its own. To imagine this seems to require a very weak intellect, or a very extravagant fancy. To justify the notion, reason would say that express clauses should be alledged, excepting the Sabbath at once from the volume in which it is found, and the special code of which it is an article. These should not be of an inferential sort, but should express their thought with all the plainness and directness of which words are capable. This second argument holds this language. The decalogue has been analysed. It has been seen to consist of ten enactments. It has been shewn that in the *general* it is of the texture of the volume whereof it forms a part—when the examination has taken up the several institutes the like conclusion has been attained to. Each of these has been found to be susceptible of a double sense. It has been demonstrated in each case that to follow the letter is to take a course which conducts to consequences that are pernicious or absurd. What is the amount of likelihood that one of the ten is to be interpreted in a different style? What is the degree of probability of this being the case in the absence of any direct statement

that might give it likelihood? To take nine of these articles in their turn, to subject each to close scrutiny, to find that there is more than one of them which men already virtually confess to be emblematic, that there are others on which their sentiments are divided; to perceive that there is not one of them which exhibits a catholic thought until it undergoes the process of conversion; to observe that there are the strongest reasons for thinking that Jesus or the Apostles give us the spiritual phasis of these enactments, to exhibit this much in regard to nine is surely to alledge an argument of first-rate power why we should consider that the tenth is to be estimated by the same rule. Is it a code singularly succinct, symmetrical, consecutive,—is it to all appearance peculiarly homogeneous; and are we to be guilty of such illogical conduct as to render nine of its statutes in one manner, and to construe the tenth in the very opposite tenour?

3. A third argument would alledge in regard to the Sabbath, that it belongs to the Old Testament by more titles than those which we have named. It not only occurs in the volume, and forms part of a code plainly typical in its complexion, it is also one *link* in a chain of regulations which all the churches maintain to be peculiar to the dispensation of Moses. There is a complicated system of days of which the Sabbath seems to be only a part. This plan took cognisance not only of the seventh day, it had regard also under certain circumstances, to the seventh *week*. The first intimation of this fact occurs—Exod. XXIII. 14, 17,—“Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year; Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.” In like manner—Exod. XXXIV. 22, 23,—“And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end

“Thrice in the year shall all your men children appear
 “before the Lord God, the God of Israel.” Deut. XVI.
 9, 10, 15, 16,—“Seven weeks shalt thou number unto
 “thee: begin to number the seven weeks from such time
 “as thou beginnest to put the sickle to the corn. And
 “thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy
 “God with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand,
 “which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God according
 “as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee. Seven days
 “shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God
 “in the place which the Lord shall choose; because the
 “Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and
 “in all the works of thine hands, therefore thou shalt sure-
 “ly rejoice. Three times in a year shall all thy males
 “appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he
 “shall choose: in the feast of unleavened bread, and in
 “the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and
 “they shall not appear before the Lord empty.”

In the account given of the order which Solomon observed in the offerings which he presented in the Temple, the festival of weeks is specified as one of the stated solemn occasions—2 Chron. VIII. 12, 13,—“Then Solomon offered burnt offerings unto the Lord on the altar
 “of the Lord, which he had built before the porch; even
 “after a certain rate every day, offering according to the
 “commandment of Moses, on the Sabbaths, and on the
 “new moons, and on the solemn feasts, three times in
 “the year, even in the feast of unleavened bread, and in
 “the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles.”

It is as little a matter of doubt that this system had regard to *months*, and that the seventh month was a solemn feast. Lev. XVI. 29, 30, 31,—“And this shall be a statute
 “for ever unto you; that in the seventh month, on the
 “tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and

"do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you; for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord. It shall be a *Sabbath* of rest unto you, and ye shall afflict your souls by a statute for ever." We consider that our argument receives material aid from the clause last cited. Here the seventh month is not only enjoined but is designated by the name *Sabbath*, just as if the term was equally applicable to it as to the seventh day. Lev. XXIII. 23, 24—"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying; speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall ye have a *Sabbath*, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation." Numbers XXIX. 1, 12: "And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work; it is a day of blowing the trumpets unto you."—"And on the fifteenth day of the seventh month ye shall have an holy convocation; ye shall do no servile work, and ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days." Besides these passages we find references to the festival of the seventh month, forming a continuous line down as far as the prophet Zechariah.

We have as valid evidence of the fact that the seventh year was observed as a solemn festival. Exod. XXIII. 10, 11: "And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof; but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still; that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard, and with thy olive-yard." In Lev. XXV. 3—8, the same enactment is repeated and more at large. In the book of Nehemiah it

related as one of the symptoms of holiness which the people exhibited, that they resolved to respect this statute. Neh. X. 31 : " And if the people of the land bring ware, or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the Sabbath, or on the holy day ; and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exacting of every debt."

The system proceeded still further, seven multiplied by seven rendered the *forty-ninth year* also a solemn occasion. Lev. XXV. 8—18 : " And thou shalt number *seven Sabbaths of years* unto thee, seven times seven years ; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall you make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof ; it shall be a jubilee unto you ; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall that fiftieth year be unto you : ye shall not sow, neither reap that which groweth of itself in it, nor gather the grapes in it of thy vine undressed. For it is the jubilee : it shall be holy unto you, ye shall eat the increase thereof out of the field. In the year of this jubilee ye shall return every man unto his possession, And if thou sell ought unto thy neighbour, or buyest ought of thy neighbour's hand, ye shall not oppress one another. According to the number of years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee : according to the multitude of years thou shalt increase the price thereof, and according to the fewness of years thou shalt

“diminish the price of it : for according to the number of
 “the years of the fruits doth he sell unto thee. Ye shall
 “not therefore oppress one another, but thou shalt fear
 “thy God ; for I am the Lord your God.”

These several passages seem to form a chain with *five* links—a day, a week, a month, a year, a term of years. But it is freely admitted by all, that four out of the five belong to the old economy. Why retain the fifth ? Is it possible to separate them ? Does it not appear a probable inference, that if the greater part of the system belonged to Judaism the whole belonged to it ? Is there that about the seventh day which essentially distinguishes it from the other periods of time that were observed as solemn occasions ? Is it essentially *doctrinal* while they are *formal* ? Or are there distinct passages that draw a line between it and the other holy days ? Does not Paul seem to put all upon the same level when he makes it matter of accusation against the Galatians, that they observed “days, and months, and times, and years ?” Does he not in another instance appear to justify the same conclusion when he says to the Colossians, “Let no man therefore judge “you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, “or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath (days), which “are a shadow of things to come : but the body (is) of “Christ ?” He who calmly considers that it was a part of the old economy to exhibit evangelical thoughts under the emblem of *periods of time*,—he who bears in mind that the seventh day was, in one way at least, a member of this piece of mechanism, will demand strong evidence to convince him that if much of this was typical, there should be any part exempted and endowed with a character different from the other terms of the series.

4. There are passages in the Old Testament that appear to declare the Fourth Commandment to be of a ty-

pical nature. Exod. XXXI. 12, 13: "And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, speak thou also unto the Children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: *for it is a sign* between me and you throughout your generations: that ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you." Ezek. XX. 12, 20: "Moreover also I gave them my *Sabbaths*, to be a *sign* between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them. * * Hallow my *Sabbaths*; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God." In stating this to be the meaning and object of the Sabbath, Scripture seems very plainly to put it upon a level with the things which we call types. If it designed to set forth this thought, we do not know how it could have been expressed more explicitly than by using the term which is actually employed: a sign. But if a sign and a type are of the same nature, we know that types are things which belong to the old economy. There is no point in Theology more frequently advanced and more generally allowed than this, that the system of types was superseded by the advent of Jesus Christ, and the manifestation of the holy spirit. The Sabbath is spoken of as a sign. But of what is it a sign? Surely of that which is its principal idea, *rest*. But is not Christ described as the rest prepared for the people of God? In that case he is the antitype, and being come he abrogates the type. If he not only observed the law, but magnified it and made it honourable; if in other particulars he is considered to have given an answer to the figures, why not in this? Is it not very disparaging to his person, and to the office of the spirit, to maintain, that we need a ceremony to be a sign between us and God?

The passages which we have cited, say of the Sabbath that it is a sign,—there are others in the Old Testament that

seem to tell us what it signifies. Ps. CXVIII. 20—25 :
 “ This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall
 “ enter. I will praise thee : for thou hast heard me, and
 “ art become my salvation. The stone which the build-
 “ ers refused is become the head stone of the corner.
 “ This is the Lord’s doing : it is marvellous in our eyes.
 “ This is the day which the Lord hath made : we will re-
 “ joice and be glad in it.” This passage hangs well to-
 gether when it is regarded as a series of figures pointing
 to one subject. It is already admitted that the thought
 expressed in the term *gate* is applicable to Messiah,—it is
 allowed that he himself insists upon the appositeness of
 the image and says, “ I am the *door* of the sheep.” In
 regard to the next expression, the *stone*, the evidence is
 still more direct that Christ is intended by it. He applies
 the term to himself more than once, the prophet Daniel
 dwells upon the thought and renders it emphatic—the A-
 postles in two or three instances inform us that the Son of
 God was the stone despised by the builders. But imme-
 diately after that mention is made of the stone, is added,
 “ this is the *day* which the Lord hath made.” Unless this
 be a continuation of the preceding thought, unless its
 meaning be that the same person who is called the gate
 and the stone is also the day, unless this be designed
 to bring forward a third image descriptive of the per-
 son who is portrayed by the two that precede, the
 paragraph ceases to have connection and regularity of
 structure. To suppose that after Messiah has been re-
 ferred to as a gate and a stone, and when he is spoken of
 in the verses that follow as the blessed personage “ that
 cometh in the name of the Lord,” the small intermediate
 space should be denoted to the Sabbath day in a sense for-
 eign to what precedes and what succeeds, is to imagine a
 sentence constructed upon principles in which method

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logic and common sense have no share. But there is another scripture which does not allow us to *infer* this truth but expresses it in so many words. Isa, LVIII. 13, 14 :
 " If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath ; from do-
 " ing thy pleasure on my holy day ; and call the Sabbath
 " a delight, *the holy of the Lord honourable* ; and shalt
 " honour HIM, not doing thine own ways, nor finding
 " thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words ; then
 " shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord." The bible some-
 times gives us a thought in its two forms, literal and spi-
 ritual. Of this we have a striking illustration in the fol-
 lowing passage. Isa. XLIV. 3 : " I will pour water upon
 " him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground ;
 " I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing
 " upon thine offspring." Here the first part of the sen-
 tence is occupied in expressing by an image what are the
 intentions of God, the second half gives the doctrinal form
 of the thought, it explains the image. We have no doubt
 that this is what is done in reference to the Sabbath in the
 passage we have quoted. The idea is first given out in its
 figurative version, our attention is drawn to the Sabbath in
 its literal form, after this is achieved we are invited to re-
 gard the Sabbath as the holy of the Lord and honourable,
 we are enjoined to honour him, we are informed that in so
 doing we shew that we delight ourselves in the Lord. The
 Lord is a jealous God, his glory he will not give to ano-
 ther. But in this passage this institution is named the
 holy of the Lord, it is designed by the personal pronoun
him,—is not this equivalent to an assertion that the day
 being the type of Christ it is competent to speak of it in
 language that properly belongs to the antitype? When
 we consider that we have this passage at the hands of trans-
 lators who had no design, and could have none, to bring
 out this idea, it looks very convincing.

5. The next set of circumstances that may be adduced in connection with this topic, is derived from the attitude which our Lord took in regard to it. To say that he observed this day, is to say absolutely nothing in favour of the opinion of those who consider that it is still binding. To say that he kept the ordinance, is simply to repeat what none deny, that according to the flesh he was a Jew; that it belonged to his mission, and was *essential* to it that he should take upon him the whole of the hand-writing of ordinances, and nail it to his cross. To make it an argument that the Sabbath-Day is still to be observed, that the Lord Jesus kept it in the days of his flesh, is to employ a reason no more cogent than to say, that every Jew kept it whilst the Mosaic economy was in full vigour. The argument that Jesus hallowed the seventh day, has no more necessary relation to our conduct than that he was circumcised, that he repaired to the temple, and that he observed the Passover. To make our Lord's conduct tell in this question, it would be requisite to prove that he did more than this. It would be necessary to shew that in addition to keeping the day himself, he issued some decree that had the effect of distinguishing between the Sabbath and the other institutes that were in use under the law. Has he done so? Frankly, we consider that he has not. He kept the day, but he does not give it perpetuity by any precept. He did what it was indispensible that he should perform as a surety for the Church; but he did no more. If there were any occasions that he seemed to honour more than others, the seventh day was not in that list. There may be some little plea in favour of the notion that he put honour upon the **FIRST** day of the week, since it was the day on which he rose from the dead, and that on which he shewed himself in more than one instance to the disciples. But the first day is certainly not the seventh. We can

understand how some should think that because of these circumstances it is very suitable that the first day should be preferred for religious conventions. We can follow the reasoning in this case, although we consider it decidedly flimsy. But how the fact that the first day seems to have been somewhat distinguished, should be made a reason for the perpetual observance of the Jewish Sabbath, is a point which we cannot see to be agreeable to any rules of reasoning. When Paul alledges it as a proof that the priesthood is changed, that Christ sprang from *Judah* and not from *Levi*, he commends himself to our intelligence as speaking sanely. What would we think of his logic did he assign this historical fact to prove that things are designed to move on as before? In like manner, were a theologian to advance it as a proof that we do not live under the law, that Christ rose on the first day of the week, and selected that day to meet with the disciples, we might think the argument, although not convincing, carried some likelihood with it. But what would be our idea of his sanity were he to bring forward these points in connection with the first day, as serious arguments why the seventh day was to be held sacred after the Jewish manner? Absurd as such a mode of reasoning may look when distinctly stated, this is nothing more than one of the favourite arguments used in support of Sabbatical sentiments. There is a plea, though a particularly small one, for believing that the first day had honour put upon it; but by what process is the first day made to merge into the seventh; is there an express statute which affirms that the practices hitherto connected with the Sabbath are henceforward to be transferred to the first day? Who can say that there is? Our Lord enters into many discussions in regard to the Sabbath. Can we collect from any of these that he intended it to continue? As far as they favour any view

they justify the contrary opinion. He proves that it is lawful to perform good deeds on the Sabbath, that David, his type, ate the shew-bread on the Sabbath, that the priests in the temple profane it and are blameless, that the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath. We do not alledge that any, or that all of these statements amount to a declaration that he is the antitype of this day; but we affirm that in the extent they point any way, they point in this direction. It cannot be looked for that our Lord should have roundly said this,—had he done so, there would have been no place for our present discussion, as the point would have been settled long ago—what we do assert is that such was the tendency and spirit of his remarks. The Jewish teachers surely understand him in this manner. Had his observations run in a contrary direction they certainly would not have proved so unpleasant to the leaders of the people. Could he have said anything more congenial to the feelings of these formalists than if he had enforced the obligations of the seventh day? Was it not because his comments virtually went to abrogate the ordinance, and instead of the ceremony to bring in the *morale* that they were so very distasteful to the Jewish doctors? The practice of our Lord in regard to the Sabbath, says no more than that he complied with a rite which was quite peremptory upon him as the scape-goat, paschal lamb, or sacrifice for his church. Had he done anything less in this way than he did, he would not have made a plenary atonement. As to his language, while we would not say of it that it is thoroughly explicit, yet that of itself it decides the question in our favour, we would affirm without any hesitation that it inclines that way. It harmonises completely with the spiritual, it does not coincide with the formal view. It contains seminally within it the thoughts that are more broadly exposed to

tice in the epistles. It is as plain as our Lord employs in regard to other ordinances that have been allowed to pass away. It is as transparent as we can expect from him who lived under the law, and who on all occasions was in the habit of speaking to the people in parables. It is as distinct as upon an *a priori* view of the subject we are entitled to expect, when we consider that during all the life of Christ the law existed by divine right; that it was not our Lord's wish to lead his disciples to pass *per saltum* into the modes and ideas of a new dispensation; that a certain amount of twilight was allowed to hover over the earth, until it should be removed in its own time, and after the revelation of the third person of the Godhead.

6. There are passages in the New Testament that appear to say expressly that the Sabbath day belonged to the old dispensation, and that it is the doctrine arising out of it that appertains to the present economy. We consider of course, that all those scriptures which compare the law and the gospel, which contrast the bondage of the one with the freedom of the other; all those which speak of types and ordinances as things that were abrogated by the coming of Jesus Christ; all those which describe rites as matters incompatible with true liberty; all those which point out the distinction between an economy that is sensual and carnal, with another that is mental or spiritual,—those likewise which censure men for their proneness to the letter and will-worship, we are of opinion that all such passages concern this question, and might properly be adduced in support of our argument. We abstain from advancing them, because they are general. We believe that they prove the point beyond a doubt; but as they do so in its *philosophy*, rather than in its *letter*, men would take advantage of this to deny their bearing on the subject. In addition to these general statements, there are two or

three passages that appear to announce our view in express terms. That Scripture which occurs Rom. XIV, 5, 6, certainly seems to make all questions connected with times and seasons to be matters indifferent and things which each man is to decide for himself. "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day (alike.) Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it." This text if it stood alone, would appear to prove this much, that there is no day enjoined in such a manner, as that the non-observance of it can expose a man to the imputation of guilt. But if it is good for this much, it is good for more. There is no institution in the Bible that stands on the footing of a matter of taste. Wherever there is an ordinance, the injunction is peremptory, and the obligation to comply with it cannot be put aside. It would be to introduce ideas hostile to the dignity and completeness of the divine nature, to suppose any thing else. An ordinance which may be observed or left undone, is not from heaven. It is usual enough in the old testament to allow an alternative, to propose one of two things, and to leave it to circumstances to decide which of the two is to be preferred. But this is not to represent a divine ordinance in the light of a thing indifferent,—this is to exhibit a proper regard for the dissimilar situations in which men may be placed, and to make the institution binding in one or other aspect. We do not hesitate to say that in the whole bible there is not one example of an ordinance that is left to man's choice whether to perform or to omit it. Each of them is enjoined in the most express language, and each circumstance of time, place and manner, is determined with vigilant minuteness. Those theologians mistake the drift of Paul

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argument who derive from this passage the notion that there is any such thing in the bible as an institute on which there *may be two opinions*. He does not, as many suppose, assert that there may be two men holding opposite views of a sacred subject, and both of these correct. The object of his argument is to establish this other principle, that a young convert is not to be rejected because of his weakness,—that he may have legal ideas, that he may be under the influence of scruples about days and meats and drinks,—that these although they prove him to be weak in the faith, do not point him out as one who is to be regarded as an unbeliever. Paul does not bring before us two persons equally sound whilst they take opposite views of these matters, but he depicts a strong and a weak man,—he exhibits a person whose weakness consists in this, that he believes in certain days to be observed, and in certain meats and drinks that are to be avoided,—and he shews the deportment that the strong man is to pursue toward his weak and prejudiced brother. One cannot extract from the reasoning of the Apostle, either of the two following propositions, that the gospel enjoins days to be kept, or that it allows us to follow our inclinations as to whether one day is to be preferred to another. The only construction that it will endure is this,—that the gospel does *not* take cognisance of days and meats,—that it does *not* justify the believer in drawing distinctions in such things,—that it does *not* represent the man who scruples, as equally respectable and sound with the man who scruples not—but that having a tender regard for human frailty, it enjoins the man who is strong to deal gently with his neighbour who is legal, ceremonious, and weak. We allow any one to derive from this passage the inference, that we are not entitled to deem a man an *infidel* because he is sabbatical in his tenets—but we do not be-

lieve that it will sustain a conclusion more favourable than this, in regard to distinctions in meats and days.

The passage to which we have already referred in the epistle to the Galatians is still more express,—and the locality in which it occurs adds to its emphasis. The object of the whole letter is to exhibit the difference between the two covenants. In the course of it the allusions are frequent and severe to those who sought to introduce the bondage of the old testament into the liberty of the new. In the very centre of this train of reasoning, the Apostle brings the charge against the members of this church, “ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” He considers this fact a sufficient reason why he should say to them, “I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed “upon you labour in vain.” Do the advocates of the sacredness of the seventh day mean to deny that this text arraigns their ordinance amongst others? Has not Paul exhausted words in order to include every practice that attaches reverence to any one season, has he not employed *four* terms where *one* might have seemed to suffice, if he had wished to leave Sabbatarians without excuse, could he have denounced their views more expressly within the same compass—do they pretend that the ceremony to which they cling is not a day nor a time—can any thing enable them to escape the shock of this scripture except a passage or passages in the new testament, declaring that the seventh day is not intended, and can they alledge any such justification of their ideas?

That other scripture in the epistle to the Colossians to which we have also referred, is even more explicit. In the passage where it occurs, the Apostle exhibits the import of many Jewish rites. Thus he gives the doctrine shadowed forth in circumcision, when he says, “In whom ye also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made

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“without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the
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he explains the idea veiled under the ceremony of baptism
by water, when he says, “Buried with him in baptism,
“wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of
“the operation of God, who hath raised him from the
“dead.” Continuing in the same strain, he shews that
the effect of the death of Christ was to take out of the way
and nail to the cross, the handwriting of ordinances that
was against us. Not contented with this general state-
ment, Paul proceeds to specify what these ordinances
were; what purpose they originally served, and what is
the relation in which the man of the new economy stands
toward them. They are such points as meats, drinks,
holy-days, the new moon, and the Sabbath. The purpose
which these things fulfilled, whilst they continued in force,
was to be the *shadow* of things to come. The position
which the Christian is to occupy in respect to them, is to
be of such thorough freedom that no man is entitled to
judge him. Could any thing be stronger than the chain
that is made up of these several links? Christ, in the
course of his mission, fulfilled the ordinances; and by ful-
filling, annulled them. The object of these types while
they lasted, was to predict coming events. These things
being come, the shadow expires. But among these har-
bingers of the Gospel was the Sabbath day. Being deli-
vered from the yoke of these rites, let no man interfere
with your liberty. We ask again if our opinion be not
fully justified by the reasoning of this passage?

There is another scripture which is more convincing
than any of these, not because its language is more ex-
press, but because the argument is more fully drawn out,
—we refer to the third and fourth chapters of the epistle
to the Hebrews. One object of these chapters is to shew

the spiritual aspect of the *wilderness* and its events. In the third chapter the argument is completed, insofar as the historical portion of it is concerned. From the seventh verse to the end of that chapter, an induction of particulars is brought together, the purport of which is to the effect, that in the days of the Old Testament, the people tempted God, that as a punishment they did not enter into the land of promise, but that their carcasses fell in the wilderness. The fourth chapter is principally engaged in applying these facts. In doing so, the following motives and reasons are brought forward. The example of the elders is adduced as a warning why we should fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. We are reminded that it is the privilege of those who *believe* to enter into rest,—in confirmation of which a clause is advanced taken from the ninety fifth Psalm: "As I have sworn in my wrath, if " they shall enter into my rest." Our attention is directed to the fact that this threat was made, " although the works were finished from the foundation of the world ; in other words, we are invited to ruminate on the circumstance that people who were in possession of *the ritual Sabbath*, are debarred from entering into God's rest.—This rest, then, must be something different from the mere outward rest of the seventh day. This point is rendered still more apparent by another scripture, which still further specifies the nature of the rest. In this passage, a certain day is limited, for it is said, " to-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." But this passage occurs in *David* ; it cannot, therefore, have regard to the rest which *Joshua* was appointed to give the people who followed him into the land of Canaan. The rest did not allude to the seventh day, because it referred to something yet to come, and this was present. It did not relate to the

entering of Canaan, for that was past, whereas this had reference to some future event. From these premises, Paul derives the conclusion, "there remaineth, therefore, a rest (or keeping of a Sabbath) to the people of God." Since the rest referred to, was not the Jewish Sabbath, was not the going into the land of promise, was not any other carnal fact of the old economy, it is something catholic, something spiritual, something which continues to subsist for the people of God. Having brought us so far, the apostle describes the characteristics of this rest. It is of a mental, or moral, nature ; it is that of which the external sabbath is an emblem ; it consists in the circumstance that the man who enters into it, "hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." The ceasing to work for one's-self, the willingness to lean upon another, the passing from a scene of struggle, into one of acquiescence, is the thought or philosophy of this sabbath of the mind. The expression that follows, makes it all the clearer that it is a condition of the soul, that is intended, "let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of *unbelief*." Above all, the ideas that succeed, render it most plain, that the person of Christ is the object under discussion. In this sense, the succeeding context will give forth this idea, which is palpable and coherent : labour to enter into this rest ; accept what Jesus has done for his people ; beware of insulting him with unbelief ; seek to become one with him ; kiss the son lest he be angry—"for the word of God is quick, "and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, "piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, "and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the "thoughts and intents of the heart—neither is there any "creature that is not manifest in his sight : but all things "are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom

"we have to do." In what connection does this notice of the *word*, or Son of God, come in ; is it not in that which we have developed ; and would not this last sentence be without relation to the preceding context, unless our view be taken of the whole ? How natural and scriptural, then, seems the argument which we have attempted to dissect ; God says of old time to some of the people, that they should not enter into his rest—but in so speaking, he did not refer to the seventh day, for it was come ; nor to Joshua and Canaan, for they were past ; but to something that was yet future ; therefore, there remains a rest for the people of God ; and it is the genius of that rest, that the man who partakes of it reposes from his works, as the Lord did from his ; let us, therefore, labour to enter upon this rest, which is Christ—for the word will not suffer himself to be mocked ; he will take signal vengeance upon those who deny him ; he will dash in pieces those upon whom he shall fall. We consider this passage the most complete in the New Testament, upon the question of the Christian Sabbath. It dwells upon the subject, it deliberately discusses it,—it shows what it is *not*, and what it *is*. It is not the seventh day ; but it is to be buried in baptism, or crucified together with Christ. It is to abjure self, and to put on Christ. It is to cease from self-righteousness, and to resign ourselves over to God, that he may work in us, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

7. *The reason of the thing* would seem to supply several arguments that will run in the same direction, and point to like conclusions with those which we have already canvassed. It would suggest, that the distinction between the two economies, is, that the one is ceremonial, and that the other is doctrinal. But if this distinction apply in the general, how comes it that it seems to be overlooked in this case ? The ordinary rule of interpreting

the Old Testament is, to transmute its statement into something higher. This process has already been carried out in a considerable extent; and in the degree in which it has been pursued, the results have been good, why should it not be followed out, until no part shall be exempted? We have found an equivalent for other ceremonies and festivals, for altars and incense, for slaying of victims, and blowing of trumpets; for the Passover, the feast of tabernacles, and the jubilee,—for each of these a thought has been found in the New Testament, each of them has been seen to terminate in a *doctrine* which is loftier and better than the *rite*; why should not the same principle be extended to the seventh day? Reason would suggest that there must be something very peculiar in this institute, if it escapes from a principle so general; if while all the things in its neighbourhood undergo change, it continues what it was; and reason would ask a categorical explanation of this assumed difference,—it would request to be shewn the features of the ordinance which claim for it this exemption; or it would ask to see the scriptures that impart to it this exceptional position. Reason would be disposed to give forth the dogma, that at the first glimpse of the subject there is no apparent cause why a *day* should be retained when *weeks*, *months*, and *years* are abolished. They are seemingly of the same texture; if there be a difference, in what does it consist; if none can be pointed out, why make a distinction? Reason would further propound the dilemma, how can a day be singled out without producing will-worship? To observe such an ordinance, a man does not require to bring down wisdom and strength from above, enough for the purpose is supplied him by nature. To place religion, then, in that to which each man's natural ability is quite competent, is to help out the illusion by which men are led to

consider themselves holy without having the spirit of Christ. The amount in which this spurious religion prevails, is stupendous, as most men will admit ; reason would prompt the remark, that it can never be otherwise so long as any part of the Old Testament remains unconverted,—that to suffer any one ordinance to stand in the raw-state, is to make sure of a *nucleus*, round which all that is earthly, sensual, devilish, will collect. Reason would further make the remark, that freedom of feeling and action can never exist in any high state, so long as an opinion prevails that any one rite is of obligation. There is a great deal in Scripture to this effect. One can hardly fail to remember many passages that express this idea either directly or by implication. And it is a true thought. Ceremonies can be practised by any one, and therefore they make Church almost as broad as the population of the country. They minister to pride, and therefore they are productive of self-righteous men. They are the species of things in which the superficial and the ignorant naturally find the most pleasure ; and therefore they are apt to occasion a crusade of men of ignoble character, against those of greatest sincerity and depth. Moreover, they are visible, and therefore they afford to the meddling, bigoted fool, a guage by which to measure his neighbour, and one which *he* can employ, because it requires only the use of the eyes. Further, things ceremonial give rise to *masters of ceremonies*. These will generally resemble the matters that give them existence, and will be shows rather than realities. Being thus unsubstantial, having just enough of penetration to perceive that with rites their occupation is gone, they will secure to them a protracted career.—They will strive to make it seem that they are associated with religion itself. They will connect them with venerable names, with ominous antiquity,—in a word, with the

lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. To the woman whose vocation it is "to suckle fools and chronicle small beer," they will present the question in an aspect that will be interesting and intelligible to her parturient nature. To each grade of mind and mode of character, they will have the address to display the subject in such a light as will be likely to engage their sympathies. Reason would be disposed to say that true and undefiled religion must consist of things that are essential to holiness, things that nature cannot give or take away. It would alledge that ceremonies do not belong to this category; that they have no necessary tendency to produce holiness; that wherever they most abound, there real piety will be found to be at its lowest point; that they put it in the power of every unconverted man to seem what he is not; that they furnish a means by which one man may most mischievously domineer over his fellow-beings; that they provide a lurking place in which the worst forms of duplicity can take shelter and demand homage; that they call into being that false intriguing class, which, aided by leisure, some talent, human depravity, and silly women, do so much to throw a chain round society which few are upright enough to seek to break. Reason would subject the topic to calm analysis. It would deliberately put the question, is there a connection real or adventitious between this ceremony and true religion? Does the bible establish such a relation; does observation show it to exist; is the one thing productive of the other; if it be, under what circumstances or conditions does the cause give rise to the effect? It would go close up to the subject, and would without fear put the question, since the observance of the seventh day is held to be essential to Christianity, explain to us the philosophy on which this depends, shew the connection between the cause and the effect, clear up how it

is that so many employ the cause without arriving at the effect, show again how some have come at the effect without venerating the cause.

Further, reason would press the argument, that if the seventh day is to be held sacred, there is no alternative but to keep it in the very letter, and after the Jewish manner. He argues in an intelligible manner, who says, that the rest of the seventh day is to him a doctrine in which he believes, on which he reclines, and that he has no further concern with the ceremony or type, but to extract from it its true meaning. He also speaks in a way to be understood, who says, that he observes the day, with all the punctilios by which it is surrounded, and who accepts it as a point still to be carried out, that the smallest infraction of the regulations connected with his sabbath, should be punished with *death*. The one takes the *spirit* of the institute, in all its breadth and freedom ; the other takes its *letter* in all its tyranny and rigour ; and although only one is reasonable, both are intelligible. But we do not understand the predicament of him who accepts neither alternative, who denies the doctrine, and yet does not take the full sense of the type. He occupies a position which has not even the appearance of being defensible, which belongs neither to the old testament nor the new. Anomalous as this status is, it is that of the church. The most rigid advocates of the sacredness of the day, come no closer to scripture than this—are neither Jews nor Christians—are neither thoroughly ritual, nor thoroughly spiritual. cannot claim the benefit either of the type or the anti-type. It is a miserable and a foolish situation to be cramped and bent under the pressure of ordinances, and yet to have no right to consider, after all, that the thing has been well done. We advise the church, in this question, to be either cold or hot ; to run entirely to the ceremony, and so to

steep itself in a Lethean state, which will ensure it a sort of animal satisfaction, that will last through life, which is something ; or if it considers this predicament to be carnal and unwise, we recommend it to lay hold on the *idea* of the ceremony—and by so doing to apprehend the benefit that arises from ceasing from our own works, and living by faith on the Son of God

Reason remarks yet again, that the keeping of one day in seven, appears hardly compatible with that thorough-mindedness, which, on our Lord's shewing, is the philosophy of the law and the prophets. The language of Jesus says, that the whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, are to be devoted to the worship of the Most High. The language of the fourth commandment appears to set forth a view according to which, the seventh part of our services seems to suffice. We allow that it is possible for a man to hold the decalogue in its letter, and yet to be more spiritual than this would imply ; but we do not believe than this could be a frequent case. On the contrary, we are of opinion that the general effect which the holding of the letter would produce, would be a merely formal character, which missing altogether the thought of the institute, would exist in a state of mechanical compliance with outward evolutions. Where it assumed a better aspect, where the letter had not slain entirely, we conceive that the influence would be to allow only "a little life." In no case could we imagine strong faith to be consistent with a thorough-going Jewish view of this institute. Reason would tell us that the theory which we would derive from an *a priori* survey of the subject, agrees with the results that we come at by regarding it from the side of observation ; that what we thought probable by looking at it from one quarter, we find to be actual by inspecting it from another. This is the condition of men.

They are either utter formalists or weak believers. Reason whilst it sees the fact, would attempt its explanation, it would affirm that this is the effect of ordinances, and of the Sabbath amongst others. If we find that the usual religion which prevails, is a thing which lies, steals, covets, and envies through six days, and on the seventh tries to atone for these defects by a Jewish "mass ill mumbled," reason would inform us why it is so. If we perceive that the ordinary aspect of society exhibits men who not only do not round off the circle of faith and conduct, but who take umbrage at the supposition that there should be any thing more perfect, reason shews that the solution of the problem mainly consists in the formal opinions that obtain in the Church. If on all sides there is a discrepancy between the apparent creed and the actual practice, and one of so decided a sort as to give rise in some quarters to the most curious and intricate hypocrisy; in others, to the utmost immorality of conduct; in others, to the wildest licentiousness of sentiment, reason comes forward and says, that there is sufficient explanation of this, in the existence of rites that engross the attention of men, that take the place of religion, and that prevent men from communicating directly with heaven.

These are some of the arguments which we consider may be fairly alledged against a literal reading of the Fourth Commandment. We suspect that the period in which the ordinance has had the greatest sway, is since the reformation. Before that time it was one of *many* ceremonies; since then it has been one of *few*, and the attention given to it has been in proportion. This, at first sight looks singular, when we consider that Calvin positively denies its validity, and that others of the reformers partook with him in this opinion. It appears less peculiar when we reflect, that they did not come at this conclusion

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by a *legitimate* path, that they were not able to reason out the doctrine of the two economies—that they did not perceive all the ten commandments to be spiritual—that they excepted the fourth in an arbitrary manner from the literal interpretation—that whilst they denied that it should be observed as a *day*, they had not the light to show what it signified as a *dogma*; when these facts are borne in mind, the men of these last three centuries are not to be blamed beyond measure if they have not followed the reformers, who if right in the main, could only claim the credit of being right by chance. Thus, the opinion of Calvin has stood recorded in each edition of his institutes, but has not taken a living form in the feelings of those, who in other particulars, have recognised him as their teacher. The institution has exerted enormous influence along all this period. The holiest men have commended it, the wisest have sought to enforce it by argument, the most eloquent have adorned it with their rhetoric, the great body of the people have taken its yoke upon them, and vast is the share it has had in forming the character of men. Of all institutions, it is that which has appealed to the feelings of the largest number. Of all, it is the one which has had the most share, in bringing the mass under the power of that something which is not religion, and yet seems to be so. If a second beast has sprung up since the time that the first beast was wounded; if the characteristic of this second influence be like that of the first, subjection to the letter without a perception of the spirit, the seventh day has been a leading instrument in effecting this result. We admit all that men alledge as to the influence which the ordinance has exerted in the way of curbing; we merely affirm that such police-like effects have been very dearly purchased. From the reformation downwards, there have been those who have *felt* truly on the subject;

but their influence has been very limited, and properly so, because they have not been able to prove what they felt. Men are hardly to be censured, if they are not convinced by that which has not assumed a coherent form, in the minds even of those who defend it. They are excusable, if they wait until theory and sentiment begin to take the shape of *argument*.

Of late years, the tendency has been, on the whole, to fall away from the ordinance. It is not observed with the precision that marked the practice of society, fifty or a hundred years ago. We cannot say that the circumstance affords us much comfort, because we believe that the result has been attained to, in an *empirical* manner. We consider that commerce will flourish the most, when there are the fewest restrictions; but we do not on this account feel any warm sympathy with the smuggler. The correct manner in which to evince our agreement with the principles of free trade is, to aim at the regular abolition of all statutes and regulations, that give strength to the opposite system. And so of this question. We think that our version of the fourth commandment, is a doctrine, not a day. But because we are so minded, we do not admire the conduct of those who evade the day, without understanding the doctrine. Two things are requisite—a good end, and a right way to it. If we are correct in our opinion; if the Sabbath of the New Testament mean the peace of mind which is the fruit of faith, let the idea be taught, let its beauty be exhibited, and let the letter, with all its narrowness, hypocrisy and bondage, melt away before this fuller disclosure of the Son of Righteousness coming forth with healing on his wings.

CHAPTER V.

THE HOUSE OF GOD.

"Whose house ARE WE, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

HEB. III. 6.

Since the time that the Israelites journeyed through the Wilderness—which is more than three thousand years—men have been in the habit of attaching an idea of sacredness to places and buildings. Not to touch, in the mean time, on the feelings and practices of the chosen people, in this matter, we suppose that at a very early period, the idea passed from them into the adjacent countries. The ten tribes, when they made their secession under Jeroboam, did not fail to have this doctrine established in their domain. Their leader perceiving that he might lose his influence, if his subjects were permitted to repair to Jerusalem, at the solemn festivals, resolved to turn the sentiment of local religion to his own advantage, "And Jeroboam said in his heart, now shall the kingdom return to the house of David; if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of the people take again unto their Lord even unto Rehoboam King of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam King of Judah.—Whereupon the King took counsel, and made ten calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. And he set the one in Bethel, and the other put he in Dan. And this thing became a sin: for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan. And he made an house

" of high places, and made priests of the lowest of the people, which were not of the sons of Levi. And Jeroboam " ordained a feast in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day " of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah, and " he offered upon the altar. So did he in Bethel, sacrificing unto the calves that he had made : and he placed " in Bethel the priests of the high places which he had " made. So he offered upon the altar which he had made " in Bethel the fifteenth day of the eighth month, even in " the month which he had devised of his own heart : and " ordained a feast unto the Children of Israel ; and he " offered upon the altar, and burnt incense."—I Kings XII. 26—end. This is one of the first distinct notices that we have in the annals of the human race of the transference of the opinion of local sanctity from Jerusalem to another spot ; it happened about nine hundred and seventy five years before the Christian era. Out of this event without doubt grew the chain of circumstances by which the Samaritans became a people so distinct from the Jews, with doctrines peculiar to themselves, with a temple of their own, and with antipathies so very decided against the race from which they originally sprung. The idea of the sanctity of a place which God himself originated and consecrated, and which he set up amongst the Jews immediately after their departure out of Egypt, was, after it had legitimately subsisted among them for a period of near five hundred years, piratically conveyed over to another spot. It is probable enough that similar transactions may have taken place before this. Some of the nations or tribes that dwelt in the vicinity of the Holy Land, may have been pleased with what they saw among the Jews, may have liked the notion of a peculiar connection between heaven and a particular spot upon earth, and liking it, may have sought to plant it in the soil of their own

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land. To believe that there is a spot at which the heavens draw nearer to the earth, where man without parting with his lusts, may become the subject of influences that hallow and that save him, where he may hold mystic conference with powers that whilst they assure him of the happiness of the hereafter, do not rudely interfere with his carnal methods of enjoying the present, there is something in this plan that is singularly agreeable to human nature as it is everywhere to be found. It is to improve upon this idea to bring it near. It is not only to possess it, but to possess it in a comfortable form, to bring it within an easy distance of a man's dwelling. It was on this feeling that Micah, the man of Mount Ephraim, proceeded when he said to the Levite, "Dwell with me, and be unto me a father and a priest, and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year, and a suit of apparel and thy victuals." He felt all the luxury that belongs to the subject when he thus reasoned with himself, "Now know I that the Lord will do me good, seeing I have a Levite to my priest." This was not the thought that Jehovah sanctioned, when at the first he connected sanctity with that Ark which he commanded Moses to construct, or afterwards with that Temple which he enjoined Solomon to build. These things were *doctrines*, and he designed them to serve that end to the men of the old economy, and still more to those of the times of the second Covenant. But although this was not their intention, it was that to which they often grew. Men did not concern themselves to understand the figurative character of these sacred localities, they were content with a superficial view ; they perceived that an honour was put upon a particular place ; they saw that this exerted a strong influence on the minds of those who dwelt around the favoured spot, and they desired to transfer the virtue to neighbourhoods

in which they had a nearer interest. In some cases, as in that of Micah, superstition with a dash of covetousness, would be the leading motive; in others, as in that of Jeroboam, the man saw through the illusion he was preparing for others, and acted at the instigation of merely politic feelings. It was a weak thought to indulge, that because the Almighty had chosen to invest a place with a nominal sanctity, thereby to supply men with a diagram in which they might discern great doctrines, therefore it was competent to any one that pleased to change the place, to make the sanctity real, and entirely to lose sight of the thoughts that were contained in the original device. There was no parity at all between the two ideas. We see the attempt made at an early period of Jewish history; and we perceive that out of it sprung the distinction, which all along continued to be so marked, between the Samaritans and the Jews. At a later period, the King of Babylon is probably to be regarded as performing a similar act, when he conveys the furniture and vessels of the temple to his own capital. It seems reasonable to think that in this act, he is to be regarded as prompted not merely by a love of spoil, but as influenced by the equally strong lust of superstition, which would cause him to wish to convey into his own empire that divine favour of which Jerusalem used to be the principal sphere. Because God had nominated Jerusalem to be the locality at which his character was to be displayed, one man attempts to transfer the idea of sanctity to Samaria, another seeks to convey it as far as Babylon. The attempt did not rest there. It seemed to spread in a ratio somewhat parallel with the colonisation of the earth. We perceive it introduced into each region that the human family successively enters upon.

At the time when classic literature opens and puts us in possession of minute details respecting many of the re-

ces which peopled the old world, we perceive sacred localities recognised in many quarters. There were spots more illustrious than others. There were places which by very catholic consent were allowed to stand in close proximity to the celestial regions; but it seems probable that each country of any extent had its own especial shrine. Several centuries before Christ, we are able to point to many places which had become eminent in this way, which were recognised as illustrious centres, which drew to them at stated periods crowds of ardent devotees from distant quarters. There were such spheres in Persia, in Asia-Minor, in Egypt, and in Greece. As if to shew that they sprung from one parent system, they were with minor diversities, upon a similar plan. Each had a body of priests, altars that smoked continually with victims and incense, a holy lamp that was kept constantly burning.—In imitation of the shew-bread, each had a sacred cake that was presented to the idol; and founded probably on the idea of the inner temple, each seems to have had an oracle, a hidden sanctuary, and a set of mysterious doctrines. Scholars inform us that these practices had travelled far; and among the illustrations that they give of this, they apprise us, that the Phœnicians, exploring remote seas in the pursuits of trade, transported the ideas that had sprung up in Asia into the far West. We are told that Ireland became a noted sphere for superstitious rites—that it obtained the name of *Insula Sacra* or the Holy Island; and that its groves and hills were early scenes of that Druidical worship, which for centuries before the Christian era, seems to have found favour among the Pagan nations. Men learned in such subjects, are able to adduce an immense amount of information relative to the temples, shrines, and oracles of the heathen. They have drawn up copious accounts of the superstitions of

East and West, and have put it in the power of all who are curious, to know the liturgies and ceremonies that have been found to obtain from China to Peru. The names of Thebes and Memphis, of Olympus, Dodona, Ephesus, Delphi, Corinth and Athens, are familiar to the minds even of general readers, as associated with shrines, idols, and peculiar rites ; the words Eleusis and Nemea bring up even to those who are not singularly erudite the recollection of stated festivals, crowds of worshippers, illuminati, dark mysteries, and many other particulars that usually group themselves round eminent centres of heathen worship. The learned are also in the habit of admitting that fact to which we have adverted, that the general system in each instance is analogous, and that the differences are adventitious, and lie within narrow compass. There would probably be little difficulty in obtaining a verdict from scholars, to the effect that all this radiated from one point ; that Jerusalem was the mother of all these modes and rites ; that whatever we find peculiar to the worship of Jupiter, Saturn, Mercury, Diana, Apoll , or Bacchus, may be ascertained to have been borrowed, with more or less mixture, from the place which Jehovah instituted for the regulation and instruction of the house of Israel.

The introduction of Christianity did not immediately or seriously change this state of things. Soon after that event, indeed, a blow was aimed at the centre of local religion, and the temple of Jerusalem was levelled with the ground. But the system was too congenial with human nature, to be allowed to pass away. It altered its *form*, or it shifted its *sphere*, but it did not cease to flourish.—Not very long after the gospel was promulgated, the adoration of places became prevalent within its enclosure.—It is probable that Jerusalem was never allowed to lose that sanctity which belonged to it by right in the times of the

first covenant. The Apostles, it is notorious, did not rise superior to the illusion. Paul, the wisest of their number, obviously did not overcome the influence; and although in his epistles he lays down positions which are quite subversive of such ideas, and which agree with all scripture in assuring us that local religion is foreign to the genius of the new economy, in his conduct he allows himself to drop down to the level of what had ceased to be scriptural, and fall in with that regard to a place which ought to have passed away with the other shadows. It is morally certain that if the Apostles did not entirely break free from the law, none of their immediate followers exhibited more strength of mind. Thus a plea was afforded for the statement that the first teachers of Christianity lent their sanction to the adoration of places. Men attended to the things which they did on their ordinary footing of *agents*, they omitted to notice what they said in their extraordinary capacity of inspired *recorders*, and preferring the human to the superhuman, they derived lessons from their practice that could not have been extracted from their writings. Thus, customs properly belonging to the dispensation of the Old Testament, were with great facility, and small doubts of their propriety, brought over into that of the new. Men who were known to occupy a higher station than any mortals before them ever filled, betrayed enough of preference for Jerusalem and Judea, to justify their followers in their own eyes in carrying such feelings to a much greater height. Hence, although the publication of the gospel opened the eyes of men to several great truths that were hidden from them during the reign of the law, it would appear that a regard for places continued much what it had been before. Jerusalem, to the Eastern portion of the church at least, occupied the position of a holy city. It was a privilege to dwell within

its walls ; it was a blessing to reside in its neighborhood ; there was a virtue in the spots that had been trodden by holy feet ; it was the duty of the faithful to repair thither at stated intervals ; it was to be expected that in these fanes, their communication with Heaven would be more beneficial and direct. Jerusalem was not the only centre of such attractions ; it was not long until Rome came to be regarded in a somewhat similar light ; and a multitude of other places in the Eastern and Western regions, which had been the scene of the martyrdom of some eminent saint, or had witnessed some transaction of more than ordinary importance, were invested with a sacred character, and became shrines to which it was thought right or incumbent that the faithful should repair. Because the Almighty had made it a characteristic of the first covenant that a certain place should be considered holy, and probably because the Apostles were not quite distinct in shewing by their conduct that such an idea constituted no part of the new dispensation ; such were the reasons why the notion survived the introduction of the gospel, and why it subsists in force down to the present hour. Although the sphere of this feeling extended in proportion as the gospel advanced ; although a multitude of places sprang up to claim veneration each for itself, it seems to us that Jerusalem continued in every successive period the main point where a holy influence was supposed to reside.

The gospel was six centuries old when an event occurred that probably tended to perpetuate the sentiments of which we speak. An impostor of eminent capacity busied himself to found a new religion ; he drew largely upon the pages of the Old Testament ; he extracted considerable portions of its incident and morality, interweaving what he found there with what his mind invented, he constructed a system which was new without being original,

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and peculiar without possessing any excellence in style or thought. The author of this plan by admitting as he did the divine character of the old testament, and the claims of Moses to be considered a Prophet of the Lord—by asserting the sacredness of Jerusalem, and by contriving that another city should be invested with like holy attributes, helped to give life to such opinions, and by his energy, and that of several of his successors, they became identified with a fourth part of mankind. For *Mahomet* to depone to the sacredness of Jerusalem, and without invalidating this statement, for him to put a halo of sanctity round Mecca, was to give the sanction of a very influential mind to sentiments that are strong in human nature, and that being so, are easily kept alive. If there was any risk of the opinion dying out, the Prophet of Arabia obviated it, and that at a time when the minds of men must have been much more susceptible of such impressions, than at present. Much about the same period that Mahomet put together the scheme of doctrine that was to command so great an influence in Asia, that other system which was to stamp so deep an impression on the feelings of Europe began to arrange itself in a coherent form. *Po-pery*, whatever plan of Chronology we incline to, sprang up at a time neither very much before, nor very long after the publication of the Koram. The two things were sufficiently near together to be pronounced cotemporaneous by those who are not finical in regard to dates. But it formed an essential element in that system to attach reverence to buildings and places. Thus the two great antagonist creeds, one of which was first heard of in the seventh century, the other of which assumed the shape of a regular plan of ecclesiastical policy about the same time, both coincided in making it a part of religion to consider certain places as especially sacred. The idea gained force

with the progress of the Church of Rome; and as the Jewish nation were constantly repairing to the temple, so one feature of the dark ages lay in this, that a considerable part of the population of Europe was in a state of continual movement, journeying to the Holy Land, or visiting shrines of reputed sanctity in countries less remote. The event which is usually adduced as the most remarkable in the middle ages, grew out of this idea. The *Crusades*, a circumstance that spreads itself over many centuries, that interested all the chivalry, talent and piety of Europe, that cost so much blood and treasure, and that produced so many effects intimately connected with the welfare of the most conspicuous part of the human family, took their origin from the prejudice that believes in holy places. Had not Jerusalem continued to be to men a sacred City, these celebrated campaigns could not have occurred. The opinion which prompted the Crusades, subsisted with unbroken force down to the Reformation. For the opulent and adventurous, Palestine presented a sphere in which they could bid their piety wax warmer; and hence there was a great highway thronged with pilgrims between the East and most of the countries of Europe. For those less enterprising or wealthy, there was a shrine in their own riding, or province, or country, or perhaps in some adjacent land. The ascending scale of opulence, leisure, or courage, had a corresponding graduated list of places that conferred benefits on the devotee in the direct ratio of the difficulties that he encountered in visiting them. It is romantic enough to look back upon these remoter periods and to see so considerable a number of the inhabitants of Europe braving the dangers of the sea, the perils of war and plunder, or the hardships incident to countries without accommodations for travellers, in order that they might find peace of mind and piety in the distance. It makes a

and as the temple, so a considerable state of concord, or visiting remote. The remarkable in the *Crusades*, many centuries, of Europe, that produced the welfare of the family, took their in holy places. a sacred City, occurred. The consisted with un- For the opulent sphere in which and hence there ms between the For those less ne in their own aps in some ad- lence, leisure, or ist of places that irect ratio of the g them. It is ro- remoter periods the inhabitants of the perils of war o countries with- er that they might nce. It makes a

motley scene, which we can imagine the poet or painter to survey with peculiar interest. It appeals strongly to the fancy, and is in the full sense of the words curious and bizarre. But it will not bear to be estimated by any nicer rule, because it is the reverse of what is reasonable and wholesome. These practices coexisted along with the worst crimes. The men who risked so much in order that they might visit some famed locality, procured a dispensation thereby, which enabled them to perpetrate crimes with a comfort of mind that they could not otherwise have felt. He who had committed murder could by this means expiate the offence, and reconcile his conscience to new deeds of violence. He who intended to shed blood, could survey the prospect with composure, because he looked at it through the medium of a pilgrimage which he designed to perform. If men sought for religion not within their own breast, but in buildings and localities, it is but natural to suppose that virtuous conduct would not appear to them an essential part of saving faith. Where so visionary a sentiment is entertained as that the man who is not religious in one parallel of latitude, may become so by going to another, actions will resemble the ignorant and immoral opinion by which they are governed. Even the heathen poet saw further than this, when he expressed it as his idea, that those change their sky but not their mind, who sail across the seas.

The reformation found the notion in full vigour, and did not materially alter it. That part of the Church which adhered to the old creed retained this along with its many other superstitions; and that other part which called itself reformed, if it rose in some degree superior to this prejudice, did so without being able to explain how it came to change its opinions. In these three last centuries there have been many men who have thought, or at least sus-

pected, that there is no particular virtue in places ; but they have felt rather than reasoned, and have not seen far enough into things to know why they thought so. A *sensitment* can scarcely be viewed as a respectable thing in Theology, and those who entertain it can hardly expect to bring others under its power, when they are unable to give it expression in a form that will endure scrutiny. On the whole, the generations of men who have lived since Luther, have been under subjection to this visionary idea ; the exceptions have been hardly more numerous than is enough to make the rule plain. Those who have looked down upon the prejudice, have not acted rightfully—they have *cut* the knot which they were not able to *unloose* ; they have held a theory which they could not reason out. No man is entitled to depart from the letter of an institution, until he is in possession of its spirit—to throw aside a type, until he understands the anti-type. We consider it probable that there have not been twelve men since the promulgation of the gospel that have had a scientific view of this subject, and that have been able to state what it means as a figure and as a doctrine. The great mass have calmly and stupidly succumbed under the weight of the ceremonial notion ; and the few who have been too acute or independent to submit to that yoke, have escaped from prison, not by the door, but by the window. We esteem these last almost as little as we do the former, because they do not enjoy their freedom with a clear conscience, because they have not vigour effectively to resist the tyranny of the letter, because there is no method or science in the liberty which they have stolen. It becomes a man to do one of two things : either to explain what the *temple* means in the language of the New Testament, or else to act in regard to it, as we find the Jews to have done during the reign of the law. Confining our attention to

the time that has elapsed since the commencement of the Protestant struggle, the idea of sanctity residing in places and edifices, has had mighty influence. In *Poper*y, it has been one of five or six dogmas that have kept the proseylites of that creed in vice ignorance and thralldom. In *Episcopacy*, it has been a strong and a gainful dogma, and has greatly helped to give life to a system that has been almost as arrogant and nearly as hollow as the older formula. In those sects that have affected a republican mode of government, the idea has been much repudiated, and much believed in. And this is not remarkable, because those who have seemed to deny it have never shewn cause for their denial. Putting all these things together, it has reigned with an almost undisputed sway. Like the Sabbath, it has been one of a very few ideas which in their combined form, constitute the religion of the vulgar. If the tendency of things is to enable all men to profess, without constraining them in almost any instance to look to the root of the matter, this tendency is powerfully seconded by the doctrine of holy buildings. How can a man think badly of his faith or practice, who helps to keep up what he hears called a house of God ? He reverently repairs to it once or twice a week ; he bends to it the supple hinges of the knee ; he bows the head to it ; he duly subscribes for bells and pulpit fringes ; he decorates it with Christmas greens. Can it be that all this amount of duty, somewhat costly, singularly tiresome, deplorably childish, will not make up a *little* religion ? Did not the great Dr. Johnson, after telling us of one Mr. Campbell, that he was dissolute and sceptical, consider that he compensated for these faults, when he added : but, sir, he never passes a church without taking off his hat ? This may be taken as the expression of the medium or average sentiments of men. To revere an edifice, to let one's piety wax warm-

er among the ruins of Iona, has stood during these three centuries on the footing on which Johnson puts it ; it has been accounted not perhaps as the highest token of piety, but certainly as one of these most respectable graces that may properly be brought in to soften censure, and to prove that a man is, after all, in possession of genuine goodness. To some it has been very much more than this ; to others it may have been a trifle less ; to the majority, it has been about this much. In all Protestant persuasions, not to speak of Popery, the house has meant something ; in certain of them, it has been regarded as a temple, a sanctuary, a place that deserves the expressions of the Psalmist when he declares the tabernacles of God to be lovely,—in all it has been taken for a great deal more than can find a warrant from Scripture, or from common sense.—Whilst in one Protestant sect the edifice has been considered a thing that demands a peculiar rite whereby it is for ever to be distinguished from all other buildings, and every fragment of its stone or wood is to be esteemed too holy to be applied to any other use, the other persuasions have had the same superstitious feelings without giving them the same formal expression. The most intellectual part of the Protestant Church has pursued the former course, has avowedly taken its ideas of ecclesiastical policy from the Old Testament ; the dissenting bodies, as they are termed, have, we suspect, wished to enjoy any benefit that accrues from sacred buildings without incurring the risk that might proceed from avowing their ideas too broadly. Hence in British and other Protestant countries where it is the boast of the population that they have broken the shackles of superstition, and that they belong to a faith that has been reformed, this very low and imbecile idea is found to prevail even among the classes that have the largest amount of refinement and learning. How

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can we with sanity maintain that evangelical opinions have leavened any considerable portion of the people, or have made any very profound impressions on the character, where the best-born, the wisest, the most virtuous, believe that holiness can reside in stone and lime, and that it can be invested with this quality by a man, who, it is perhaps notorious, does not possess it himself? There is a depth of mental inanity and of moral obliquity in this, that renders it ludicrous to suppose that our opinions have been reformed in any high sense. This is a method of finding "sermons in stones," that argues any thing but philosophy and honesty of mind. Let it not be said that these remarks are arrows shot into the air, and that there is no mark at which they can properly be aimed. Let it not be alledged that opinions of the kind to which we refer do not belong to the age. Those who might suppose so are in error. The churches absolutely swarm with preachers who owe their very existence to old Jewish ceremonies ; and the majority of hearers, like their guides, have no nearer connection with religion, than consists in a compliance with certain externals. If all other proofs were wanting, the things that have lately fallen out in an influential part of the most influential of all the churches, are sufficient to show that the worship of places and buildings is in accordance with the temper of the age. Who are those that advocate the notion ? In a church distinguished above all the others for politeness and learning, they are among the most erudite, respectable, and elegant of the members.—In this circle of attic refinement, consisting also of many individuals, the adoration of the place is avowed, justified, and commented on. These men are not ashamed to enter into the details of the subject, and from an edifice the whole of which is in their estimation sacred, to select portions, and to explain the specific amount of reverence that

belongs to each. They are as curious and minute in the article of altars, windows, railings, folding stools, vestments, and fonts, as if they were able to lay claim to a new revelation from *Sinai*, and as if they had a distinct commission to procure a new assortment of upholstery for a new temple. Their doings appear to us to prove more than is commonly attributed to them. They seem to us to show, that the spirit of the age is more intensely superstitious and formal, than is generally supposed. We judge so on the following principle, that it is not an usual thing for many men at one time to diverge very widely from the course of opinion that marks their period; and if this principle be true to nature, the Puseyites of our day are to be regarded not as a peculiar sect, not as a body of men who differ very materially from their times, but as persons who owe their notoriety to the fact that they hold, in a sense somewhat exaggerated, the ideas that in a more modified form are entertained by the great majority of those who think at all in our era. It is a dangerous, and it is an ignoble heresy to hold, that a building which man's hands can erect, which is liable to all the casualties of the weather, which is of no certain form, which is in no two instances the same in shape, arrangement, or material, which the architect constructs at the instigation of his own fancy—it is a heinous folly to maintain that this anomalous thing is the same as that temple whose plan came down from Heaven, whose distributions and utensils were fixed with rigorous precision, and which was not many but one.

He who holds the idea, seems to expose himself to the edge of all that terrible invective which the prophet flings at the man who cuts down a tree, and from one part of it constructs the idol that he worships, with another part of it warms himself or cooks his food. The two thoughts seem to stand precisely upon the same level. It appears

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quite marvellous at first sight, that an idea so plainly de-
nounced, and one that looks too ridiculous to be enter-
tained at any period, should be held and gloried in by many
of the best informed of an age so advanced as the pre-
sent. We are led by it to the conclusion that the moral
and the intellectual are very closely connected; that a
man's religious sentiments have a very immediate influ-
ence upon his understanding; and that if his heart be not
right with God, a mind naturally strong or acute will not
protect him from forming opinions that a pious man of
much inferior intelligence would perceive to be pernicious,
impure, and absurd. It cannot be doubted that the adora-
tion of places is a doctrine that must have a strong effect
in debasing the intellect, and corrupting the heart. It is
one of those thoughts that places religion within the reach
of fallen human nature, and that enables any man to seem
pious, who is willing to take the little trouble necessary to
comply with an external. Furnished with this, and a few
other ceremonial notions, the unconverted minister can
set forth upon his iniquitous career, and can succeed in
imbuing thousands with his opinions, whereby he renders
them more the children of hell than they were at first.—
An idea such as this, encourages multitudes to profess re-
ligion, who without it would not feel that they had any
plea that justified them in taking God's name upon their
lips. Thus it tends to make the hypocrite, or self-decei-
ver, a common character. It is admitted by those who
look into the springs of action, that a *fiction*, whether in
theology or in any other science, is of bad influence upon
the moral sentiments and the thinking powers. It accus-
toms a man to play tricks with his reason. It habituates
him to receive as true, what has no foundation, in fact;
it puts him in the circumstances that lead him to confound
the distinctions between right and wrong; it induces him

to form more categories than really exist in nature—so that he comes to believe in things that are positively true, in others that are positively false, and in others that it is fair to make true or false, according to the mood in which you are, and the relation in which you stand to the subject. A mind that has acquired the habit of doing such work, must soon lose all fineness of perception. It has been supposed that the fictions which abound in the science of *law*, have had a considerable share in producing the laxity of principle which is so often supposed to denote the members of that profession. And the view is true to nature : for those who are regularly trained to call crooked straight in one instance, will very readily acquire the habit of extending the principle, and of making it one of their regular courses of action. On these grounds, the doctrine of holy places, if a sophism, and a stupendous one, must have a bad influence, must habituate the mind to falsity, must render it a frequent occurrence that men, in the article of religion, will have little regard to the difference between the real and its opposite. This mode of feeling, by the admission of observers, is very common. *Carlyle*, and others, who undertake to note the aspects of our times, represent it as an all-pervading feature. They state it to be so general as to banish from the face of the earth the noble, the god-like, the mode of character that believes the truth, that adheres to it, that is willing to do battle and to suffer for it. Has the dogma of sacred buildings no part in bringing about this prevalent tendency to falsehood ?—Can men pollute their minds with a notion so miserably weak, so heinously erroneous, without acquiring qualities that will show themselves in other directions ? Can they commit such an outrage upon sense, as to predicate things of inert matter, which can only exist in connection with spirit, and not evince that the lie which they have taken

into their system has become an essential part of it? Can a man be reasonable or moral in other parts of his conduct, who in questions relating to his eternal welfare, shows himself capable of such gross falsehood? Believing that a great delusion exists in regard to this subject, and thinking that the consequences that accrue from it, tend to help the cause of spiritual tyranny, of hypocrisy, of ignorance, we propose to bring it up to the test of Scripture, and in so dealing with it, we shall enquire, *First*, what the temple meant in the old economy,—*Second*, what the New Testament gives us cause to suppose is its *antitype*, or *doctrine*.

First. It would be wrong to approach the subject without making the avowal, that it is one of which we know little. The temple is a great magazine of figures, of which only a very few are in any degree understood. The general design—the grand features of the building are so far apprehended, that probably most Theologians would allow in a somewhat loose manner, that they have a relation to the structure of the Church of God; but anything more precise than this, is not in the possession of the biblical student. Those who are even moderately acquainted with Scripture are well aware, that the list of apparatus that enters into the fitting up of the tabernacle or the temple, is voluminous and minute in a degree that perplexes and fatigues the ordinary reader. In each instance many chapters are occupied with the recital of the particular objects that composed the sacred furniture. So long is the catalogue, and so minute are the directions in comparison with the *seeming* importance of the subject, that scepticism has aimed many of its blows at this point. Unbelief has considered that it could scarcely have a likelier charge against the bible, than it found in this circumstance. It has given expression to its feeling in such

remarks as the following. Is it agreeable to any sane views that we might form of the dignity of a divine revelation, that so very large a space should be dedicated to mere upholstery? We might suppose it conformable to the superstition of heathens, who set great value upon things that strike the senses and excite the fancy that one of their rubrics should dwell very minutely upon furniture. Where there is bigotry and ignorance, it is to be expected that there should be many chambers of imagery, and a large display of tangible or pictorial religion. But does it at all agree with the character of the Infinite God that in the volume which he communicates to men, and which he affirms to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness; whole sections should be devoted to discussions relative to curtains, veils, borders, candlesticks, knives, spoons, and such mean matters? We advert to these remarks of the sceptical school, because they furnish one of the strongest arguments that we know of in corroboration of the statement which we made, that the subject of the temple is yet in advance of our knowledge. Had the Church been able to step forward in any very decided manner, and to append an explanation to each of the articles, scepticism might have found fault with some of the glosses, might have represented them as far fetched, but could scarcely have ventured to regard the whole subject as so very ludicrous. But perceiving that this great chapter of the bible lay undeveloped, that this long catalogue of objects was permitted to remain in a primary state, and was applied to no spiritual purpose, unbelief in a very plausible style took the subject in the raw state, and made it an argument against the whole of Scripture. It will continue to afford a shelter to the enemies of the truth so long as it lies in the unimproved condition. Until the friends of re-

ligion can go in and give a reason at least for the principal articles in the list, they must not be astonished that their opponents should persist in treating the subject as one that ministers to ridicule, and that is worthy of being assailed. Restricting ourselves to points that are either generally admitted, or that would not be very tenaciously withstood, the edifice, whether we take it as the tabernacle or the temple, in its smaller or in its larger version, belongs to the catalogue of figurative objects. That it is a figure, all Theologians admit; and any controversy that might arise would turn upon the *dimensions and exact import* of the figure. Surveying it more closely, the next remark that would carry with it the consent of most scholars, is to the effect, that the design of the symbol is to represent in a house, the economy of the kingdom of heaven, the circumstances that enter into the plan of redemption; Coming one step nearer to the subject, it might further be observed—and the statement would probably meet with the concurrence of the majority of critics—that the *two apartments* of the building has each its specific meaning, that together they possibly exhibit things in heaven and on earth. Drawing yet closer to the topic, an explanation might be given of each of the prominent objects, in either section, that might wear an appearance of likelihood to most professors of religion. It might be said, that as none of the objects can be supposed to be without their philosophy, so it is in the direct track of science to seek to ascertain what that may be. As to the *inner* apartment, its furniture consists of few objects. The Mercy Seat, which had nothing within it but the two tables of stone that the Lord delivered to Moses, would, with the consent of most interpreters, be held up as representing the person of Christ, the embodiment of the entire Law of God. Some difficulty would arise as to the exact meaning of the myth

of the Cherubims, with their wings extended over the mercy seat. Some, founding on the passage, "which things the angels desire to look into," or on the other, which says of the law that it was "ministered by angels in the hand of a mediator," incline to the notion that the picture denotes the co-operation of the angels with the son of God. Others founding on the name of the apartment, which may be made to express the holy place of the holies, building also on the circumstance that there are *three* figures in the myth, annexing this to the other fact that it is a common occurrence for scripture to set forth the sympathy that prevails among the members of the Godhead, are of opinion that there is no more likely explanation of the symbol than is contained in this thought. Both opinions agree as to the *central* object. In either explanation Messiah is represented by it. According to one view, the inner temple relates by a picture how God and angels concur in seeking the restoration of man. According to the other, it is the three divine persons that are depicted as combining their strength for this object. Passing to the *outer* apartment, we find that it contained such objects as the candle-stick, and the table, and the shew-bread, the brazen sea, and the altar of burnt offerings. We are not able to assign meanings to these of an absolute nature;—our knowledge goes no farther than to empower us to say that each of these represents some great fact in the person of Christ, or in the structure of his body the church.—The veil that separates the outer from the inner temple, we are able to say, has reference to the dimness that was over the minds of men in regard to things divine, until it was dissipated by the death of Christ. When we advance up to that immense list of other articles, that occupy so many chapters of Exodus and Leviticus, those things that Bezaleel and Ahobiab were commissioned to construct for

the tabernacle, we are compelled to make the general reply that they have a meaning, but that men have made no direct and serious attempt to discover what it may be. The same remark or something analogous may be made, in respect of that whole chapter that treats of the offerings that were to be presented on different occasions. Who is there as yet that has shown the exact thought contained in each ? It may be said in a loose vague manner, that they point to those sentiments and actions of believers, which in the New Testament are described as spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ ; but this is very general, and any thing more specific is not yet attained to. With reference to the character of the priesthood, and the various rites incumbent upon them, we are not in possession of information much more distinct. The facts, we can say, have some to relation the graces that should enter into the nature of true believers ; but the exact nature of these qualities is a point that has not yet been subjected to scrutiny. Circumstances that have not as yet received any attention, so far as we are aware, are such as the following : what is the exact meaning of the difference between the *moveable* tabernacle, and the *fixed* temple ; what are the counterpart thoughts in the economy of the New Testament ; what is the meaning of the vicissitudes which the tabernacle underwent, from its first erection down to the time when it was replaced by the temple ; what are the corresponding facts in the second covenant ; these points have not even been canvassed. In regard to the fact that David was permitted only to arrange the preliminaries that preceded the erection of the temple, but because of the circumstance that he had shed blood, was denied the privilege of building the house, it has been ingeniously remarked, that we have in this circumstance the spiritual doctrine that it was the office of Messiah to do the work

of a victim, to pour forth his blood a ransom for sin, and that it fell to the part of the spirit to take up the task where Messiah left it, and to build up the church. On this view, David represents the *Son* in the matter, and Solomon the *Spirit*. A remark that would draw with it the approbation of all theologians is, that the scene so fully detailed in which Solomon dedicates the temple, and expresses exceeding joy at the completion of the work, is proof sufficient that the transaction is one of *primary* moment. That could have been no ordinary structure which was reared on a plan transmitted from heaven, which so good a man was desirous to build, but was not permitted; which so wise a king was appointed to erect, which cost him so great an outlay of expense and labour, the accomplishment of which he solemnized with such devotion and grandeur. To say of it that it represents Christ and his church, is to afford a worthy solution to all these high matters. To say any thing short of this, is seemingly to surround us with mysteries. A remark, that so far as we are aware, has not been made before, but which when made will probably appear reasonable to some, is founded on the co-operation between Solomon and his ally, Hiram King of Tyre. It was by the joint efforts of the two that the house was built. But this was not the method on which the *second* temple was reared. It was erected by Jews alone. No *heathen* was suffered to interfere with the work. In the first instance, the greater part of the labour was preformed by Gentiles; in the second, it was executed solely by the house of Israel. We consider that the combination between Solomon and Hiram is a picture in which we see displayed the mixture between religion and the world that hitherto has prevailed in the church. In the transaction that takes place under Nehemiah we believe that we see exhibited that better line of conduct that

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shall be pursued when the elect shall have been delivered out of Babylon; or in other words, out of that state of confusion, darkness and bondage in which the churches now are. The events that befall the temple from the time that Solomon dedicates it, down to the era when Nebuchadnezzar dismantles it, and conveys its treasures to Babylon, have not been brought over into the new dispensation. Many things are related concerning it, one King repairs its breaches, another restores its ordinances, others appropriate its vessels to secular purposes. These facts have been allowed to stand as we find them; the doctrine that arises out of them has not yet been sought for or found. When a long list of kings has borne sway in Judah, the house is at length laid waste, the people are led captive, and are shut up within the empire of Babylon during seventy years. A change comes over the land of their oppressors, the captives benefit by it and obtain their release; a portion of them return to their native country, where they build a second temple, under circumstances different from those in which the first was reared. These facts too have been allowed to stand in their mere historical version, and the attempt has not been made in the way of erecting a comparison between them and the statements of the Apocalypse, to discover their antitypes.

The chief reflection thrust upon us by a review of the facts of the Old Testament connected with the temple, is, how very little is known upon the subject. The quantity of type is enormous, the amount of it that has been *converted* is very minute. The next reflection to which the topic conducts, is, that in the degree in which we have any coherent ideas about the temple, we must be satisfied that it is an affair of first-rate moment. It is one of the subjects whereon Moses converses with the Most High, during his seclusion of forty days on the top of Sinai. Its

form, materials and utensils, are recited with strange minuteness. In the shape of the tabernacle, it occupies the post of honor, the centre of the camp. It is surrounded by officials, who preside over its splendid services. As it occupied the middle of the camp, so it was the pivot on which the fate of the nation revolved. It bore a conspicuous part when Jordan was crossed, when cities were taken. When the people had grievously sinned against the Lord, they are punished by the ark being carried away by the Philistines, and detained for a number of years. To show that it was a terrible trophy, and one that was too much for the heathen, that people are struck with a disease while it is kept in their borders. The remarkable rejoicings of David, when he brings the ark from Kirjath-Jearim to Zion, denote how very important it was esteemed. The fate that befel Uzzah, when being no priest he put forth his hand and took hold of it, shows how much of divine holiness was represented by the symbol. The great prominence awarded to the transactions of Solomon in the matter of building the temple; the honourable mention that is made of those of his successors who shewed an interest in the welfare of the house; the opprobrious manner in which those are spoken of who neglected it, or violated its sanctity; the devout, earnest and frequent references that are made to it in the Psalms; the instruction given the Jews when at a distance, or in captivity, to pray with their eyes toward this house; the great importance assigned to the fact that the house was laid waste by the King of Babylon; the excessive joy that the returned captives felt and expressed when they were permitted to renew the edifice; this line of events running through so long a period, embracing so many leading circumstances, occupying so many pages of the volume that contains the whole will and counsel of God; forming so

large a portion of the history of that nation, all whose fortunes were symbols; this proves that the building round which all this revolved, must have been a great central fact.

Second. We now come to ask the question, does the New Testament furnish any information on this subject, does it say any thing express as to the design of this house? In reply, we assign the following passage—"Then answered the Jews and said unto him, what sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body. When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them: and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."—John II. 18—23.

But if this passage informs us that the temple was a figure of the body of Christ, in such a sense as that whilst he seemed to refer to the one, he was really speaking of the other; there are scriptures that explain what is implied in the expression, the *body* of Christ. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. So *we*, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."—Rom. XII. 4, 5. Again, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free. Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."—I Cor. XII. 12, 13, 27. Again, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ."—I Cor. VI. 15. Again, "And hath put all things under

" his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to
 " the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that
 " filleth all in all."—Eph. I. 22, 23. Again, " And he
 " gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some,
 " Evangelists; and some Pastors and Teachers; for the
 " perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for
 " the edifying of the body of Christ."—Eph. IV. 11, 12.
 Again, " For the husband is the head of the wife, even
 " as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the
 " Saviour of the body. For we are members of his body,
 " of his flesh, and of his bones."—Eph. V. 23, 30. Again,
 " Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up
 " that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my
 " flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church."—Col.
 I. 24. With reference also to the term *temple* and *house*,
 the following scriptures expound this doctrine, " Know ye
 " not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of
 " God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of
 " God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is
 " holy, which temple ye are."—I Cor. III. 17, 18. Again,
 " What, know ye not that your body is the temple of the
 " Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and
 " ye are not your own?" Again, " And what agreement
 " hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the tem-
 " ple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell
 " in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and
 " they shall be my people."—II Cor. VI. 16. Again,
 " And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and
 " prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-
 " stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together
 " groweth into an holy temple in the Lord; in whom ye
 " also are builded together for an habitation of God thro
 " the spirit."—Ephes. II. 20—end. Again, " But if I
 " tarry long, that thou mightest know how thou oughtest

"to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."—I Tim. III. 15. Again, "But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we," &c.—Heb. III. 6. Again, "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."—I Peter II. 5.

These passages appear to leave no doubt upon the subject. It stands on this footing. The Old Testament makes much mention of an edifice which was holy, and refers to it from the beginning down to the end of the history of the Jewish nation. But the New Testament is not silent on the matter; it explains the type, so that we have the natural image with its spiritual counterpart. That which is a *building* in the one book, becomes a *doctrine* in the other. That which was physical or sensual in the one economy is transmuted into that which is immaterial and moral in the other. And this harmonizes with the method in which the types have invariably been rendered by those of evangelical sentiments. The result attained to by attending to the explanation that holy writ supplies, is that the anti-type of the temple is the church of the living God, that elect body which owes its existence to the predestination of the father, the death of the son, and the indwelling of the holy ghost. If any thing more is comprehended in the image, it is this, that Christ is associated with this society; that if its name be a house, he is the corner stone; that if it be a body, he is the head. But this is a dignified view. It returns a worthy reply to all the bright landscapes of the Old Testament. It causes the two dispensations to agree. It considers the one to express the thought by vivid pictures, the other to give it birth in high doctrine. The man who holds this opinion

is enabled to say, that he understands and sympathises in all the movement that takes place round the temple, because it represents in *pantomime* the fates of the true church. So, then, we are shut up to the conclusion, that men have been in lamentable error these many hundred years, when they made a building in the new economy, the anti-type to all that is related of of the temple in the old. How impotent a conclusion to a brilliant succession of events! How strange an infraction of the ordinary rules of interpretation, to make the object to be *of the same texture* in each economy! What is most remarkable is not that men should have, in a rude period, embraced such an idea, but that in spite of so many vicissitudes in things, they should persist in adhering to it. That in those times when ceremony was so much to men, a fine edifice should satisfy all their scruples, and complete all their wishes, is not the most wonderful feature of the case, but that in those modern days, when the inclination is so great to reason and examine, there should be any to cling to the old fallacy, is the most curious part of the question. So long as the present idea endures, paganism, under the guise of Christianity, will have one secure retreat, and the *genius loci* will be as much worshipped as at the time when his name and existence were avowed. Spiritual tyranny will continue to prevail, in virtue of the fact that a sacred place is admitted. But if that is allowed, one man is thereby enabled to take cognizance of the religion of his neighbour, and to pronounce against him if he fails at the normal seasons to bring himself under the influence of the sacred spot. So long as the notion obtains, opportunity will be afforded to estimate piety by *geographical* rules. One man will be considered as fulfilling his duty, because at a given moment he is to be found at a particular rendezvous, another will be regarded as failing in his, be-

cause he does not make his appearance at the muster call. A holy place gives being to a people whose piety is as real as that of the stone and lime which they affect to revere. The one circumstance cannot exist without giving rise to the other. Let every other erroneous opinion disappear, there is enough to produce false religion, if the doctrine of holy places is suffered to survive. Both scripture and experience seem to assert that superstition can ensconce itself as securely behind *one* rite, as behind *many*. Moreover, a sacred building imparts holiness to its *curators*.—If the edifice is viewed by us as the temple, the man who conducts its services becomes of necessity a Levite, or rather the high-priest. Is it of evil consequence that there should be on the earth a patent arsenal to manufacture mock religion to any assignable extent ; is it a thing to be deprecated that there should be a system in full operation, the essential tendency of which is to cause ministers and people to be contented with mere formal, hypothetical, or official piety ? If we answer that it is, we thereby enter a protest against the existence of sacred places. When the opinion begins to pass away, a doctrine of importance will rise into notice. The history of the temple will be carefully studied, as emblematic of the career of the spiritual church. In this light, the vicissitudes that befall it will come up to a height of consequence to which they never before rose. Thus an immense mass of type will be reclaimed, and portions of scripture that at present serve no other purpose than to startle the tame devotee, or to encourage the wily sceptic, will be shewn to carry within them a deep and valuable meaning. Men and ministers perceiving that they cannot procure the aroma of holiness from any spot or edifice, will find themselves summoned by one argument more, to seek for it in the right quarter. With sacred places will disappear much

of that power, by which one man without godliness can contrive to place fetters upon the conscience of his neighbour. Mankind apprehending the fact, that a place under the first covenant was vested with sacredness, in order to teach us among other things the determinate character of the gospel church, will resist the ignorant plan that would retain the type, and miss the doctrine, will contend for thorough freedom at this point, will scrutinize the system that informs them of a gospel that is *independent of time and place*, will see farther into the profound admonition of the New Testament which enjoins upon us to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The house in which men assemble for religious purposes, will be regarded as a mere lecture-room, and will be estimated like any other hall of science, according to the amount of real truth that is taught in it. What is taken from the building, will be added to the hearers, and the gain will be great. The master of assemblies will be placed on the footing of a teacher, instead of that of a leader of ceremonies, and the alteration of opinion will create a demand for a very different class from that which now prevails through all countries. Ceasing to be parts of a pageant, there will be an immediate necessity that divines should be men of intelligence, integrity, and knowledge. By these changes that would impart to the religious community an absence of bigotry, and a mode of thinking in which the elements of reason, freedom, and happiness, would be more abundant than at present, much would be done to remove the objections of men of talent. Although the one great difficulty will always adhere to the gospel that it is pure, and requires purity of its votaries; although this circumstance down to the end of time will continue to repel many, it is most afflicting that men, by seeking out many inventions should embarrass the subject still more, and should

nish a plea to the discerning to alledge not merely that the bible gives forth a code of morals whose holiness is detestable to fallen humanity, but seems to enjoin rites and practices that are quite at variance with the most temperate notions of reason and common sense.

CHAPTER VI.

THE REAL PRIESTHOOD.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal Priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."—I PET. II 9.

Some writer gives it as a reason why men should be more favourably dealt with than women, in disquisitions upon human character, that men have been permitted to give their opinion on the subject without much contradiction. They have held the pen for the most part, and the question has assumed the shape that was agreeable to their wishes. The remark is applicable to many topics connected with theology. In this department, thorough freedom of discussion has not yet fully obtained, and the

men who have established the principles by which we are to be guided, have generally been those who have had a direct interest in giving a particular bias to the subject. If all who are able to think and write, had made theology the field of their speculations, it is absolutely certain that the question of the priesthood would have been handled in a very different manner. Even then, our views in regard to it might not have been more correct than they are at present, but they would not have been so exclusive and formal. They might have diverged as much as they do

now from the straight line of inspired truth, but it would not have been in the direction in which they err at present. From the time that christianity was recognized by civil power, down to the era of the reformation, the writers on theological subjects were almost invariably *churchmen*. Their's was the only class that was held to be entitled to leisure and learning. As a natural consequence, they defined the constitution of their own order, and they did so to those who had neither the inclination nor the ability to dispute their positions. Is it wonderful that when a little inquiry came to be directed to the subject, it should be found, that divines had spared no efforts to exalt the privileges of their class in regard to things terrene? They had been erecting principles in the presence of those who did not understand them; they had been issuing bulletins to those who could not read. It is agreeable to human nature that they should have stated the question their own way. It would have continued the same to this hour, had not a schism arisen in the body. The principle of competition springing up in the ecclesiastical order, put us in possession of the moderate amount of liberty that we now enjoy. Before this, Christendom had been compelled to receive its notions as to discipline and doctrine, from a court from which there was no appeal. Since this, men have frequently enjoyed the comfort of knowing that if the decisions of one section were too arbitrary, they had it in their power to run for shelter, to the opposite creed. What the formation of regular parties did for liberty in political affairs, the division of opinion effected for freedom in things pertaining to *religion*. The absolute amount of liberty procured in this manner has never yet been great, but it is considerable compared with what was possessed by mankind, when they had no resource but to accept their theology at the hands of a body wholly irresponsible to all

other tribunal. As far as we can judge from the records of the past, it was at an early period of the history of the Church, that the doctrine of a divinely instituted class of teachers was received and acted on. It is always difficult to determine to a shade the precise date of such events. It is probably to state the matter with sufficient exactness for practical purposes, to say, that the Judaical tendency which led men in such points as the Ten Commandments, the House of God, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, to mistake the type for the doctrine, induced them to carry the Levitical Priesthood without translation from the Old into the New Testament. They were in possession of carnal ordinances; it became necessary that they should have formal priests to manage them. They had holy days, and places, and buildings, and rites, and vestments; it became almost a necessary result that they should have an order of men of corresponding character. When they had gone so far into Judaism in one direction, it became the more natural that they should pursue the same route in other things. Without pretending to exact precision in regard to dates, our view of church history is, that this phenomenon showed itself *soon*. It was *late* enough in appearing to make it plain that it was not the idea of the Apostles, or their immediate successors; for in them the evangelical prevailed to the exclusion of the formal. It was *early* enough in coming in to make it obvious, that the sentiments of the love of power and place which had for a while been thrust aside by the influence of higher feelings, took the first opportunity to rush in, and lost no time to bring men again under a sway similar to that in which Jesus found them, when he reproved the Pharisees for binding on their shoulders burdens grievous to be borne. When the immediate *personal* influence of Christ and his Apostles began to die away; when the new reli-

gion had begun to assume a definite form, and yet had parted with the ardour of its first love, at this point of history did the notion of an ecclesiastical framework, regularly articulated on principles much more Levitical than Christian, gradually develop itself. We see the idea in full operation when Constantine gives to the Church a systematic polity, placing it under the jurisdiction of Metropolitans, Exarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, and several inferior gradations. The structure grew and expanded with the limits of Christendom. It built itself up with materials which it took from both dispensations. From the Old Testament it derived its scheme of the order, decorations, vestments and ceremonies, which it considered should appertain to the priesthood. From the New Testament it borrowed those descriptions that Christ and the Apostles give of the power that should dwell in the true Church. Along with these principles many of the ideas and practices peculiar to Paganism, were brought into the framework. The result was the dogma soon introduced carefully inculcated, tenaciously adhered to, and still in operation, that an absolute formula of ecclesiastical government was a part of the plan of the gospel, and that the functionaries who administered this were holy personages *by right of office*. We have no wish to overstate and we believe that we are within bounds when we say that this opinion prevailed and ruled almost unquestioned from the fourth to the sixteenth century. In all that long period, we are not aware of any attempt of importance that was made, to place ecclesiastical power upon any other footing. The Church had *two* dogmas, which gave forth on all occasions, that Christ was the King, and that he had entrusted authority upon the earth to Ministers, as his office-bearers. It was not always that these two positions occupied the order in which we have placed

them. As Wolsey was charged with using the style, "I and my King," we think it may be alledged of the Church through the middle ages, that it was beyond measure more anxious to give prominence to the dogma which set forth its own powers, than to the other which commented on the authority of its divine head. Without pretending to mark off the stages by which the idea grew up, and without affecting to enter into any minute detail of the different aspects which it assumed at diverse periods, it was a thought that soon sprung up, and that did not soon experience any strong check; and the idea prevailed in every quarter, that there was in the Bible the model of an external Church, and that to form a part of its framework was equivalent to belonging to the true body of Christ.—If even now this opinion is all but universal, we cannot wonder that in those times of ignorance and priestly exclusiveness, there should have been none able to see through it. In a period when the disciples of the *Cross* vied with the partisans of the *Crescent*, in employing the carnal arm to disseminate opinion; when a creed was invariably estimated by the amount of square miles that it covered; when it was thought a holy object to induce pagans, whether by suasion or compulsion, to submit to baptism by water; when to partake of ceremonies was deemed a necessary and infallible introduction to an eternal inheritance; in times when ideas such as these, and others much grosser, were the average sentiments of the christian world, it was quite in keeping to think that Revelation must insist upon a framework marked out by rites and holy days, and that salvation could be found only within its pale. In those times, this was a notion which men not only held, but in which they gloried. In our days, the usual thing is for men to entertain this opinion, but to hold it as one which they are aware is liable to ri-

dicule and censure, and which, therefore, they are seldom willing broadly to avow. In the good old time, men in general thought it a proof of orthodoxy and piety to declare their belief in it with all their might. It was not expressed with faltering tones, but with a loud and confident voice; it did not skulk, as if in any degree it dreaded the light of day, but stalked forth haughtily, as if sure that its reception must be cordial. Every one who knows the history of the middle ages, even very slightly, is aware that the confederation which owned the Pope as its earthly head, which accorded to him the title of God's viceroy, which awarded to him the privilege of infallibility, and which even yielded to him the name of our God the Pope, was a community which all men admitted to be of divine appointment, and to be possessed of divine powers. Perhaps at no moment of this long period, did men altogether forget that the moral, the spiritual, should coexist along with the official; on the other hand, at no moment did this idea go for much, or evince itself in any very practical form. It was well that there should be virtue; it was indispensable that there should be decency; it was well that priests should be spiritual, it was incumbent that they should lead pageants; it was good that they did not commit crimes; it was of peremptory necessity that they should not be guilty of informalities. There were two or three centuries during the course of the dark ages, in which there was scarcely any light to be seen through this dense mist of rites. The thing called the visible Church acted as a complete obstruction, and very few saw through or over it. Passive obedience to the edicts of the Church, submission to the Sacraments, attendance at festivals, donations to the Clergy; this, without faith, without knowledge, without virtue, composed the religion of men. It was not often that they had leisure to care even for this

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much, owing to the constant wars that kept society in perpetual ferment; but when they had time to do their best, this was the full extent. When a Thomas a Kempis, or any other man of similar character made his appearance, and drew the attention of a few to things of vital consequence, his advent was considered as a matter quite out of the ordinary train, and therefore as a thing that could not well excite too much wonder. Poms, draperies, vigils, pilgrimages, filled the attention so completely, that when a great and devout man entered on the scene, and sought to lead the mind to questions relating to sound doctrine, he must have been regarded as applying an article of *luxury*, rather than of *necessity*. It must have been felt that this was too dainty fare for common men, and for every day. We cannot tell exactly with what feelings the mass of the Jewish nation regarded the persons of the Levites, but they must have been deeply superstitious indeed, if they much exceeded the stupid reverence with which the men of the middle ages looked to the dispensers of ceremonies, that bore rule in the midst of them. Few indeed were the minds that penetrated through the murky earth-damp, and saw heaven beyond it. By far the greater number were caught in this midway limbo, and did not lay hold upon eternal life, because of this device which falsely pretended to shew the way. Can the staunchest admirer of the past pretend to say, that spiritual religion existed in any noticeable degree in those times; can he deny that the common occurrence was, that each mind was closed with a system, which, while it pretended to be divine, had merely a show of godliness; can he alledge that a holy man of distinct piety showed himself more frequently than a person of stupendous genius? And when the rationale of the subject is inspected, can a different result be expected? A complicated structure presents itself to

the view—it speaks in the following language : this order of men that preside at the altar are all of them holy ; these buildings in which we meet, these days which we observe, these washings that we practice, these feasts that we hold, are of the same quality. It is matter of world's experience, that men will listen to this address, and will comply with its purport. But it is also consonant with all that we know, that in doing this, they will loose the ability to do any thing more. The average intellect of men is not remarkable for its amplitude ; three or four points, good or bad, in Theology, are always enough to occupy their attention ; and if these happen to be doctrines which are not of God, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that in accepting them, the mind is debarred from having any connection with things divine. Without pronouncing an opinion at this stage, in regard to those ceremonial affairs, which are called ordinances, without saying whether they are from God or from men, this we do not hesitate to declare, that when two or three of them are much insisted on in any quarter, they always enlist the sympathies of almost all before whom they are displayed, and that a result nearly invariable is, that real conversion does not take place. Without presuming at this point to define what is the deliverance of scripture in regard to the position of the Christian priesthood, but regarding the question simply from the quarter of observation, it appears plain to us that if there are any possible conditions short of real holiness, by which an order of men can be held as entitled to take direction in the church, there is, *in that fact*, a certain provision to pollute things sacred, and to preclude the majority of men from attaining to pure and undefiled religion. It might be otherwise if godliness coincided with the natural inclinations of mankind. In that case they would feel themselves impelled by strong motives, to distinguish

between the real and the spurious. But because the reverse is true ; because the tendencies run counter to holiness, any juggle that is tolerably well contrived, leads the mind captive, inclination helps out the illusion, and men are deceived, not altogether because the bait was well devised, but because there is that within them that prompts them to be easily taken. We do not, then, at this point, directly canvass the statements of scripture in reference to this subject, we survey it from the side of experience and common sense. These inform us, that whenever a body of men has been constituted into an order to preside in the church, more especially if they have been invested with many and gorgeous forms and rites, the whole religion of the country or age where this obtains, has been acquiescence in the ordinances issued by this class. Those who have looked no further, have been the great mass of the people ; those who have presumed to enquire and distinguish have been the one or two rare exceptions, the anomalous personages, the strong minds, the single-hearted heroes who were resolved to come at truth, should it cost them the loss of ease, good name, prosperity, or even life. On all, save this little number, the stringent regulations of a hierarchy come down with an influence that produces superstitious dread, and unhesitating compliance. It is proverbial that this state of things subsisted till the reformation. The amount of opposition at any period, was little more than that which the French wit of the seventeenth century, represented as existing to his government, when he described it as a despotism, *regulated by pasquinades*.

It is of more immediate importance that we should ask how has it been *since* the reformation ; what have been the ideas current in respect of the priesthood, and what effect have they had in guiding men to true or to false

views? As a general answer to these questions, we remark, that in these three centuries, the idea of a fixed order of churchmen has prevailed in all directions, has in the majority of instances conducted men to itself and no farther, and that things have been better than they were before, chiefly in virtue of the fact, that there has been brisk competition, collision of interests, contending claims. It would be too much to say, that the ideas as to the supremacy of an order, have been quite as mechanical and servile as before. The circumstance that *several* sections have been setting forth their separate pretensions to be this order, has given rise to a small degree of freedom, and has helped to excite a slight doubt whether Scripture contemplates any definite class, distinct and separable from what it calls the "great congregation," or body of the elect. We must then say that the tendency has been from the worse to the better, and that a period is to be considered worthy to be preferred, in which the disposition to examine has begun to display itself, and in which a degree of religious liberty has been disengaged, by the happy event that communities have been under the jurisdiction of several masters, and that these have not agreed among themselves. We cannot fairly, however, represent the improvement as greater than this. The great dogma of a divinely commissioned order, distinct from the general Church, has reigned throughout this period. The beast received a wound, but it has been healed. A second beast has sprung up, which "exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, *in the sight of men*. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles

“ which he had power to do in the sight of the beast, saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword and did live.”

In spite of all the power, learning and cunning of the ecclesiastical body, this dogma of a formal priesthood could not have prevailed so widely had it not received help in other directions. Men would certainly have risen up against it, had they not considered that it was their best policy to let it pass. Of that class which alone could feel any concern in the question, the class that thinks a little, by far the greater number have always believed that their best move was to let divines have it their own way. To allow this, inferred merely that they should acquiesce in a little ceremonial, that they should consent to be silent on certain subjects, that they should submit to pay a certain percentage in the shape of black mail, and that they should endure a little tampering with the sentiments of the females of the household. Men perceived that this much was all that could be demanded of them; they saw that it was received as genuine coin, that it was permitted to pass for piety, and that those who exercised authority over them did not dare to ask for more. They may sometimes have felt restive beneath the yoke; they may occasionally have thought that the price exceeded the value received; but on the whole, they have suffered with patience. They have felt that it was cheaper to give this much than to be truly religious. At the expence of a little reserve, a moderate sum of money, a willingness to hand over a part of the family to that ecclesiastical domination which is regarded by it as a positive luxury, a man purchased a considerable amount of peace of mind. If disposed to be superstitious, he cheated himself by this means into the idea that he was really pious; if inclined to be *esprit fort*, he

procured the privilege of having his thoughts to himself. It was unpleasant to bear; but it was the least of two evils. This is the side from which the idea has received its principal succour. Learning and eloquence might have enabled it to stand for a little while; but it has endured so long, and has ruled so widely, because it commended itself to some of the worst and most common elements of depraved human nature. As I trust to the doctor for medicine, and to the lawyer for advice, so I rely upon my clergyman for my religion; such was the sentiment that Oliver Goldsmith expressed; such was the opinion that Samuel Johnson undertook to reprove, and which blaming in another, he practically verified in his own person. It gives utterance to the sentiment of mankind. It is annoying they admit, to be under the sway of a hierarchy, it is troublesome to be compelled to perform so many evolutions at the word of command, it is provoking to feel their fingers in the purse and their dictation in the family; but this screens us from our own conscience, it shelters us from the censure of the world, and if it be true that religion demands a surrender of the whole heart, it is cheaper to compound in this way than to satisfy the entire claim. This being the state of the case, the evil cannot be remedied by any method shorter than that which would remove *irreligion*. The most convincing argument might be advanced, and enough might be said to satisfy all the world, that the churches are in error in their present notions of the priesthood, this would not alter the state of things, except in as far as it made converts to religion. There is liberty in the gospel no doubt, but it can be come at only by following the method prescribed. It would avail little to make it plain that the ideas now entertained in this subject minister to slavery, unless one could at the same time impart to men a taste for real free-

dom. It would be of most trifling consequence to show that our present views enable one man to exert tyranny over his neighbour, unless one could also lead men to believe that liberty of spirit is a blessing of great price. If men are to continue unregenerate, and being so are to groan beneath the burden of their lusts, it does not much signify whether their task-master wears scarlet or black ; whether he carries a musket or a prayer book. No sincere believer would care much to set men free from the dogma that gives to a formal order the right to bear rule in the church, unless he could liberate them from the bad passions that render the dominion of such an order not only endurable, but positively pleasant. It is not that we desire to see men in possession of a freedom which they could not adorn and could not enjoy, that we seek to expose the fallacy that is contained in the present system—it is that in showing up the error, we may remove an impediment to enquiry, and may force them from superficial to thorough views. It is scarcely to be desired that a man should escape from the thralldom of a mechanical priesthood, unless he could also deliver himself from the dominion of lusts that render a police force of this kind almost a necessary evil. And therefore we would care little to say to any confirmed man of the world, shake off your fetters, because slavery is a necessity of his nature, and to free him from one despot, is merely to give him the trouble of seeking out another. But we think it a point of much moment, that when a man is forming his opinions, he should have no excuse for adopting those that are false and pernicious. At this stage, it is of prime consequence that there should be no hindrance in his path. It is because we consider that it exerts a most pestilent influence in this direction, that we think it important to lay bare the sophism. It is because we look upon the dogma as one of

four or five points that lead nearly the whole world astray, that induce all except the smallest possible minority, to take up with a style of religion which is not of heavenly origin, that we regard it a momentous matter to exhibit in what our present ideas are wrong, what are the effects to which they conduct, and what are those others which are agreeable to the Bible, and wholesome for mankind.

The influence which the reformation exerted in this case, was not to explode the old opinion but to parcel it out. By being thus subdivided, the doctrine of course lost much of its speciousness, but with this exception it experienced no material change. Since the reformation, the churches have believed just as much as before in a fixed polity, and a formal order of clergy; the only difference is that they have not agreed as to the details of the question. The subject by being split, has ceased to be quite as respectable as before. When we follow the course of events since the reformation, we perceive the unity of the visible church gradually disappearing, and many sections occurring within its compass. Each, however, has taken with it the opinion of the parent in this matter. Episcopacy departing the least from the forms and doctrines of its ancestor, has in this point, adhered the closest to the ancient view. That Church, in each period of its history, has always made far more of this idea which insists upon a fixed external order, than of those vital and holy characteristics which the bible describes as the apanage of the real priesthood. Popery itself has scarcely laid more stress on the dogma, for this simple reason, that its descendant has insisted as much upon it as in the nature of things was practicable. Hence at most times in the history of this Church, the demand has been loud and stringent for regularity of outward

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shape, whilst the internal mechanism has been left to shift for itself. The stipulation has been, let us have functionaries schooled after a given routine, set apart according to a determinate formula. If in taking up these grand essentials, they fall in with piety on the way, that is as may be, but the former things can on no account, be dispensed with. The claim has been complied with; there has, invariably been rigid order; there has frequently been uncommon erudition; and there has occasionally been true religion. Times have occurred to interrupt this tame conformity, and men have appeared within the precincts of the Episcopal Church, who by their writings and life have exposed its hollowness; but the average state of things has been contentment with the frame work. While such sentiments have been common and sometimes general, among the ordinary clergy of that church, they have almost uniformly been entertained by its prelates. Spiritual opinions have sometimes distinguished the minor ecclesiastics; but it has been expected of those who wore the mitre that they should be martinets and devoted to the drill. Thus, the features that distinguish that church, considered as a whole, have been regard to learning and strict order.—After these points, it has contained piety; but this not because it laboured for it, but because God is good. To attend during certain terms at prescribed places, to acquire a considerable knowledge of Greek and mathematics, and a singularly minute acquaintance with dogmatical theology, such are the qualifications that have been demanded of the candidates for holy orders. Any man who could comply with this much, and who in addition was willing to depone that he was moved by the Holy Ghost to embrace this calling, was held to be duly accomplished for the work. We do not merely alledge that this was the practical result, we affirm that this was the *theory* also;

that nothing more was aimed at or intended, that the Si-
meons and others who insisted upon vital piety, have never
been a numerous class, have never been influential, and
have as far as was practicable, been discountenanced by
the heads of the church. Thus, in that community which
has always been the most numerous and respectable of the
Protestant bodies ; in that section which has invariably
contained the most learning, refinement, gentlemanly feel-
ing, and unfeigned piety, the lean kine have eaten up the
fat kine, the low idea has swallowed up the high thought,
the priest of the letter has displaced the priest of the spi-
rit. At no moment since it became a church, have opi-
nions different from these which we have described, pre-
vailed in any considerable degree. To what epoch can
we point, and say of it, there were many men at that time
who saw through the trappings, and who laid down the
principle with precision that human rules can do no more
than impart an outward regularity to churches, but that
they must derive all their real virtue from regeneration be-
gun and carried on by the spirit ? Where have been
those who, in connection with this denomination, have
frankly put the whole question into the crucible, and have
analysed it without scruple ? To what works emanating
from this sect, can we point, and say of them that they
take the whole matter to pieces ; that they distinctly show
what is human and what is divine ; that whilst they per-
haps evince an excusable partiality for particular forms
they at the same time discard the notion that any suc-
things are or can be of heavenly origin ? On the other
hand, how much is there to the contrary ; what immeas-
urable disquisitions on a formal apostolic succession ; what
learning, subtlety, and influence employed to exalt an or-
der ; what uncountable dissertations on the celestial de-
scent of Episcopal polity ; what loud denunciations :

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those who should dare to maintain that another constitution is compatible with the christian religion. Has not some of the deepest learning and highest talent been devoted to such purposes; have not the positions of influence been occupied by the men who have felt the most keenly on such topics, and is not this a proof that the question which has regard to the outward appearance of the priesthood, has complete ascendancy over that which treats of their spiritual and essential character?

Many suppose that things have been better, in those Protestant sects, where Episcopacy with its much splendour and its many ceremonies, is not acknowledged. We consider this opinion to be more than doubtful. Men do not seem to be aware that it is possible to lavish as much idolatry upon a naked as upon a gorgeous formulary. The woman who has but one child, is found to bestow as much affection upon it, as the mother of twelve children confers upon her numerous offspring; the sectarian who has few rites is seen to be quite as much a bigot as he who has many. These denominations have certainly been less polished, learned and opulent than Episcopacy; but it does not follow from this that they have been more pious. Wherever plebeianism is supposed to be inseparable from godliness, wherever indigence is regarded as the necessary associate of holiness, there it will be maintained that these sects have had religion all to themselves. But when we deliberately look at the very root of the matter, when we reduce the question to its absolute essentials, when we lay down the position and stick to it, that the converted man and he only has true religion, when we estimate a church by the definite principle, how many such has it within its pale, we will probably arrive at a different conclusion.—We strongly suspect that the high superiority that these sects are supposed to possess over episcopacy, has

been founded on things adventitious rather than on things real. We are inclined to think that their partisans have admired the leaders because they were rude and harsh, because they protested perpetually against popery in all its forms, because the scaffolding was not ornate, because the creed read well, because the teachers could seldom be mistaken for gentlemen, even when they pretended to gentility, and because vulgarity could more comfortably rub shoulders with persons who had little that was dignified in mind and manners. If it could be fully proved that the doctrine of regeneration has been exemplified in any high degree in those denominations which we term dissenters, we would be inclined to believe, in virtue of that circumstance, that the article of the true priesthood was better understood by them than by the Episcopal Church. But we could not allow this much to them, simply because they have met in mean buildings, with few forms, and under instructors poorly educated, or badly fed. Hence we do not consider that the arguments usually employed to prove that these sects have been more pious, and less priest-ridden than others, have effected their object. They prove, perhaps, that there was little to idolize, but they do not convince us but that the most was made of that little. We judge that in those different bodies where a Presbyterian form of Church government has been recognised, the worship of the letter has been carried as far as in any other of the reformed churches; and the principle on which we base this opinion is this, that we do not believe that there has been more true piety here than in the more opulent and aristocratic corporation. If in these Churches, formed upon the republican model, the teachers and functionaries have, as a class, been ignorant of regeneration, if those of them who are experimentally acquainted with it, have always been a

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most minute fraction, if godliness has generally and almost avowedly been associated with secondary topics, if the inclination among them to hold to a visible Church of fixed architecture, has been tyrannous and general; on these premises alone we maintain, that the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood cannot have been appreciated within their pale. If it had been understood, the aspect of matters would have been different. It would have led men to perceive that the Bible sets forth under the figure of the Levitical body, the idea of a set of worshippers, who are as peculiar in the qualities of their mind and heart, as their types were in things external. With an opinion so pregnant with instruction dwelling in the midst of them, they could not have tolerated those mechanical notions, and those ministers of the letter, under whose influence they have tamely existed. Since the reformation, and in Protestant countries, the ascendancy of the clergy has seldom been so complete as before that epoch; but this has been owing rather to the fact of clashing pretensions, than to the want of pretensions. Dissent, begun by Luther, has subdivided itself into many sections, but in whatever points these have differed, they have concurred in upholding the dogmas of a framework divinely enjoined, and a clergy holding a commission from heaven to administer rites, and teach religion. It is probable that at most times there have been men of a discerning mind, who have had penetration enough to see through the illusion. But in general these have considered that it was their interest to let things take their course, and have thought that it would argue little wisdom in them to meddle with a sophism to which men seemed attached. From this, and from other reasons, the opinion has been so little impugned, and so little canvassed, that if at this moment the question were proposed to the whole Protestant Church,

who are the persons that in the new economy correspond with the Levites of the Old Testament, the general answer that each sect would receive would be, they are those who minister in the midst of us. Those who gave the reply would show themselves all unconscious of the broader and truer meaning of the symbol; and what is more than this, it would not at all hinder them from making this answer, that out of their ministers there might be almost none who could be suspected to be possessed of real piety. Apart from deep theological considerations, one feels astonished that mere observation has not led men to believe that there must be something radically wrong in this quarter. The use of the eyes alone, might appear almost sufficient to conduct them to such ideas as the following: here are a hundred different sects much opposed to each other, and the tendency is for them to go on increasing; here are a number of ecclesiastics in each of these communities at variance even with those within their own pale; what harmony is there in the shape and exterior of all this; what resemblance is there between this thoroughly heterogeneous mass, and the homogeneous thought of the priests in the temple; are they all Levites, or are there some among them who have no claims to that name; on what principle are we to attempt to distinguish among them; which one of the divisions can shew, in a manner to satisfy any but its own partisans, that God is more with it than with any of the other battalions? Claims so very numerous, and so very contradictory, might have tended to persuade men that the general notion here was unsound; might have led them to believe that the unity for which the bible contends, must be in something else than in the style and shape; might have put them on the way to discover the true thought.

Another circumstance that reveals how far the church-

es must have gone into formal ideas on this subject, is, the mode of conduct pursued by ministers and leading men in sects, even when the question is flatly presented to their notice. Agreement with the creed, and conformity with the rules, is unhesitatingly accepted as equivalent to godliness. A few will venture to maintain something different in theory, but it amounts to nothing in practice.—The pulpit is open to each minister within the pale of the sect or party, even where there is every reason to believe that there is nothing more than wooden conformity in his favour ; but it is not open to the best men of the adjacent sect, whose difference is so minute, that even metaphysics can scarcely give it a name. The communion table receives all who afford the same metallic test, that they are bound over to promote the designs of their sect, but it does not spread its arms and invite the really godly of other bodies—men, perhaps, who are signalling their age by their writings and their deeds. When affairs are in a state of thorough tranquility, the most discerning of a sect may be heard to speak with tolerable distinctness, of the hypocrisy and other evils existing within their own inclosure ; but let the feeblest alarm of danger be sounded, and the censors are beheld uniting in strictest league with those they have denounced, against the men they have loudly extolled. Where there is a shade of diversity in the opinions and interests of two denominations, they may be perceived to discern with some clearness, the distinction between the formal and the spiritual in regard to each other ; but when any event occurs to remove the barrier, and to render their objects the same, not only do they cease to speak, but to all appearance they cease to see. When a man is of little use to his party, because of age, or dulness, or perhaps too much sincerity, the degree of discernment manifested in regard to him, almost astonish-

es : when his talents and devotedness make him a formidable polemic, not only are such slight things as vital piety overlooked, but his vices must be not merely great but well known, to subject him to censure. When a man or a sect has really no interest to disguise the truth, it is not difficult to keep them up to the height of the correct theory, and to compel them to confess that every true believer in virtue of the spirit within him, is a Levite ; that no amount of mechanical arrangement can produce the true priest ; that human ordination, where there is no regeneration, is only a blind to conceal hypocrisy, and that no one can preach except he be sent. When all is tranquil, when no interest is at stake, it is sometimes possible by argument, to extract these admissions, although even then they are unwillingly made ; but when circumstances are changed, and when the tactics of the sect seem to require an opposite theory, all is forgotten and revoked, and Jew and Gentile are seen banded together for their common objects. Where credit is to be acquired by a treatise or a sermon, whose high and distinct theology shall speak the praises of the author, and his church, statements will be made that will prove that the philosophy of the question is in some slight degree understood. When a petition is to be signed, or a communion roll to be drawn up ; when the smallest worldly advantage is to be derived by blinking the distinction, where is the sect that hesitates ? Nay, we are disposed to believe, that throughout the Protestant church generally, the state of matters is even worse than we have described. It is bad enough when men, in their practice, contradict what they allow in theory, but it is even worse when they have lost the perception of truth in every sense. And this last we consider to be the actual predicament. We derive both from Old and New Testament, that at some period of its progress, the church is to

go into Babylon ; or in literal language, is to fall into a state of complete confusion. In this condition, men are to call crooked, straight, and bitter, sweet. We hold it to be no libel to affirm, that the Protestant church is in this state, and that no portion of it is more thoroughly involved in it, than that part which calls itself evangelical, and which is under the impression that to hold a creed which is sound in the main, is equivalent to being under the influence of true religion. One indication of this Babylonish condition, is the manner in which the question now before us is generally dealt with. Let the member of a sect comply with certain regulations that express the ideas of his party, not merely is he regarded as a person whom censure cannot well reach—he is esteemed as one who knows the grace of God. Let a teacher of religion maintain deference to the points of doctrine and discipline, that form the watchwords of his denomination, and the current opinion in respect of him is, that he exhibits the beauty of holiness. The few who have discernment enough to see further, generally allow other feelings to bias their minds, and over the whole territory the visible passes for the invisible, the formal for the real, the carnal for the moral, the priest of ordinances for him who owes his office to the baptism of the spirit. It is not astonishing that these results should take place ; for if, as all the churches maintain, the scaffolding be from heaven just as much as the doctrine, to be connected with the framework is to be holy in a sense. If it be the mind of the spirit, as all sects assert, that there is in the bible an absolute unconditional mould for the visible Church ; then, to be in harmony with this draught, is to have some connection with heaven. If, as some alledge, the New Testament sets forth a scheme of high Episcopacy ; if, as others declare, it propounds a plan of uncompromising Presbytery ; and



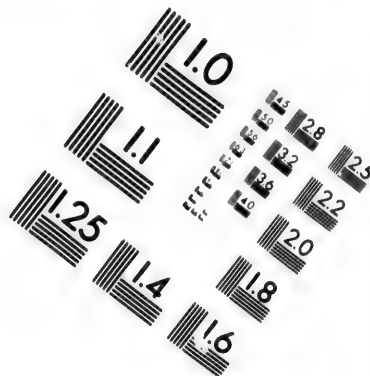
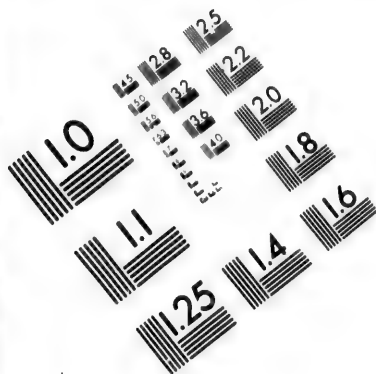
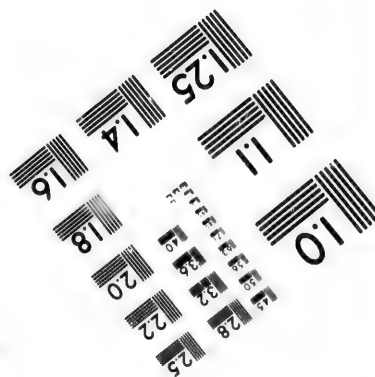
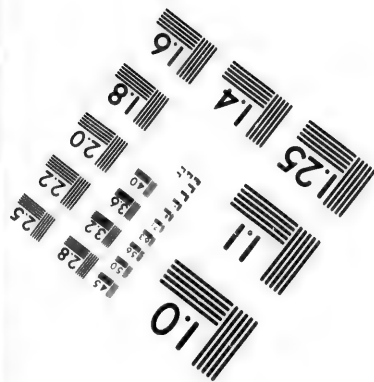
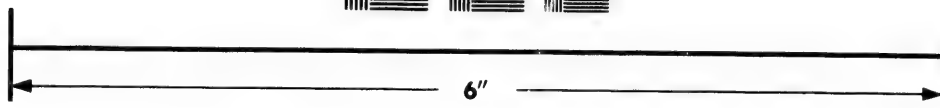
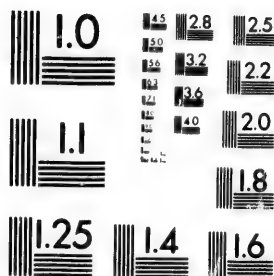


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if, as both allow, there is a rite called ordination—that is, divinely enjoined, and is quite essential to the being of a gospel minister, then to enter the Sanctuary by these gates, must mean something, and how much it amounts to, must be a fine question. It may not be sufficient to constitute a man an integral Christian, but all who hold the premises must admit that it makes him a high fraction of one. Absurd as the idea may appear, when stated thus, this is the transcript of the manner in which men speak and act. The most spiritual are not above these impressions. So far are men from believing, that regeneration and nothing else makes the Christian; to have dabbled in Sacraments, and to have entered the Church along a path of authentic ordination, makes out a case for a person which all name credible conversion, and which most consider to be the only conversion that can be obtained. We again repeat, that it seems plain to us that the major error must disappear before the minor can be removed, and that the idea of a revealed framework must be renounced before we can expect that correct views should be entertained of the real priesthood. For if the opinion be allowed to subsist, that Scripture marks off the inclosure, it becomes difficult to treat the question as any other than a most important one. And if this much be conceded to it, at what point shall we stop? If all, by this supposition, admit it to be a subject which is adjudicated, and which is therefore canonical, how shall some be prevented from proceeding further? If all, by this admission, treat it as a subject that almost comes up to the level of the prime doctrines in intrinsic importance, how shall many be hindered from regarding it as of more moment than they? And if, by common consent, the bible presents us with a scaffolding that cannot be departed from, on what plea shall holiness be refused to the minister who has been regularly begot-

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ten by the scheme, even if there be in his heart more than the average badness that belongs to unregenerate human nature?

The remarks that follow in regard to the constitution of the priest, as set forth in Scripture, are designed to furnish some check to what we consider the immoral opinions that prevail in the Churches. To take things in the order in which they occur, God, before the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, elected all the *first-born* to be his own, saying, "Sanctify unto me all the first-born, " whatsoever openeth the womb among the Children of " Israel, both of man and of beast, it is mine."—Exod. XIII. 2. With an eye to this circumstance, we find the saints in the New Testament designated as first-born, and first-fruits; thus, "the general assembly and church of " the first-born, which are written in heaven."—Heb. XII. 23. Again: "Of his own will begat he us, with " the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits " of his creatures."—James I. 18. Again: "These are " they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.— " These were redeemed from among men, being the first- " fruits unto God and to the Lamb." Rev. XIV. 4. The next fact, in the order of events, is the exchange by which the *Levites* were substituted for the first-born. "And the " Lord spake unto Moses, saying, And I, behold I have ta- " ken the Levites from among the Children of Israel, in- " stead of all the first-born that openeth the matrix among " the Children of Israel; therefore the Levites shall be " mine; Because all the first-born are mine; for on the " day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, " I hallowed unto me all the first-born in Israel, both man " and beast; mine shall they be; I am the Lord."—Num. III. 11, 12, 13. The transaction was conducted with great exactness; the Levites and the first-born were both

numbered, and when it was found that the former fell short of the latter by "two hundred and three score and thirteen," the overplus are redeemed by a ransom, expressly specified. Much stress ought to be laid upon this affair, because it is the foundation of the constitution of the Levitical order, and the judgment which we form of this event, will affect our whole ideas of that body. In choosing the first-born, God surely *intromitted with the nation in general*; in taking one of each family, he seemed to declare that he considered all the people to be holy.— If this was his meaning, it is nothing more than what he plainly declared in other instances, and by other tokens. The whole race sprang from Abraham, who was the father of the faithful, they all derived their descent from Israel, who wrestled with the angel, and received a new name; they were all subjected to the rite of circumcision, they all passed through the Red Sea, they were all baptised into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. He declared the whole people to be sacred to him, sometimes by express words, and sometimes by significant acts.— They proceeded from one ancestor, the law was given to the nation, they received one set of institutions and ceremonies, they were subjected to one mode of worship, they inhabited one land, which also was holy. If God then by enjoining them to sanctify all the first-born, intimated that he looked upon the entire nation as holy, he did not declare a solecism, but expressed that which harmonized with other things that he had said and done. But if God, in choosing them, intimated that he made a *distinction* between them and the rest of the people, then he did that which does not harmonize with the tenour of the old economy. If he selected them as *representatives* of all the nation, he did an act which appears congruous to the occasion out of which it sprung, and one that does

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not refuse to coalesce with any thing else that the Old Testament records. But if in choosing them, he set up a class quite distinct from the rest of the people, then he made an appointment, that appears to quadrate neither with the event that gave it birth, nor with the general tenour of the Mosaic law. If in consecrating the first-born, he said by a figure, that he took the *part* for the *whole*, we are not aware of any difficulty that stands in the way of the opinion; but if in choosing them he designed to make a wheel within a wheel, an order within an order, then we find ourselves in collision with a transaction that does not harmonize with the rest of the scheme. The entire people were holy. They were so in virtue of their pedigree, of divine choice, of the soil on which they dwelt, of the law by which they were governed, and of every circumstance that distinguished them in each relation in which it was possible for men to stand. Being so, it is intelligible that the God who put them in this position, should employ many different methods to set forth the doctrine; but it is not intelligible that he should do that which seems subversive of what he had already announced. Having declared the nation to be holy, we can understand how he should further impress the thought by saying, sanctify unto me all the first-born; but we cannot see how he should choose the children in such a sense, as to annul the general holiness of the nation. It is quite in unison with good sense that the Almighty, in choosing the first-born, should confirm what he had already done, should put an additional stone upon a building that he had begun to erect, should give a new illustration of a principle that he had previously laid down; but we do not see how it would be consistent in him to take the children in such a manner, as virtually to cancel what he had before promised to the people. It being the divine method to

give line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, it is in the line of such a system, for God to tell of the holiness which he required of his people, by a new symbol. If scripture never employed but one method of expressing the truth, then we would be induced to suppose in each case a new type occurred, that some doctrine radically different from any thing before propounded, was introduced to our notice. If, on the contrary, it be the accustomed plan of the bible, in all its parts, to exhibit each principle by an endless variety of metaphor, then the occurrence of a new figure should be regarded, as in all probability not the enunciation of a separate doctrine, but another aspect of something already established. We cannot imagine any truth of the bible to stand on a broader basis than this, that God chose the nation, and that he declared it to be holy to himself, in every way in which we could conceive it possible that the thought should be announced. Now this broad fact can be abrogated only by another at least as broad—was it so abrogated? Is there in the Old Testament a series of passages which declare that God had ceased to consider the nation to be his own, and that in a style quite as explicit as those in which he had previously intimated his election? If there be not such texts, then we are entitled to believe that God adheres to his choice, and that no subsequent regulations can be designed to interfere with his original appointment. The fact that the whole Jewish people was holy by ordination, is much too notorious to be disputed; but if it was so, the selection of the first-born, whatever minor principle it was intended to promote, cannot possibly be construed as overturning an appointment so much more general. On the contrary, we are entitled to apply to the transaction, the doctrine stated elsewhere, that if "the first fruits be holy, the lump is al-

so holy." The choice of the first born may very well be employed as an argument to fortify the opinion of the holiness of the nation, but cannot reasonably be used as a means of erecting the contrary position. But what is true of the first born, is true of the Levites ; they are convertible thoughts, for the one is exchanged for the other.—The reason that probably dictated the exchange was, that as the people augmented in number, it became more convenient that the service of the sanctuary should be conducted by a specific tribe, than that it should derive its officials from the whole surface of so large a body. But, without prosecuting this collateral thought, the choice of the Levites amounted to just as much as the choice of the first born ; so exactly equivalent were the intentions of God, in the two things, that the difference between the numbers of the two was made the matter of a specific ransom. That God might intimate, that in making choice of the Levites, he did that which was meant to be neither larger nor smaller than the previous transaction, he enjoined that restitution should be made, in the degree that the number of the one body exceeded that of the other. In this way the two facts become identified ; they differed as to time and place and circumstances not essential ; in their philosophy they were identical. But since the choosing of the first born was no imputation against the holiness of the people in general, the choosing of the Levites interfered with it as little. It stands on the footing of a transaction which adds another section to the appointment that made the nation holy, but a section that is *explanatory* of, and not opposed to, the general arrangement. We do not mean to assert, that in selecting the tribe of Levi, no new *idea* was added to those already exhibited ; we only intend to say that it was new in its form, and not in its substance. It was a modification of the original state-

ment, if God chose the Levites to execute functions which it would have been inconvenient for the whole nation to engage in, but it would have been a subversion of the primary design, if in choosing them he invested them with a holiness which did not appertain to the whole nation.— It was not inconsistent with his general plan, that a particular part of the nation should be separated, in order to perform that portion of the drama that represented the priestly element in the character of the believer, for to have occupied them all with this work, would have been to have instituted an arrangement that must have been subversive of their existence. Whilst it is the mind of the spirit, that every regenerate man, in virtue of the new birth, is a priest, it is not incongruous with this view that only a part of the people should have been employed in giving a symbolic expression to this thought, seeing that to have bound them all over to the task, would have been to refuse them the means of continuing their career. To have compelled all to be Levites, would have been an effectual method of preventing any from being Levites.

To the best of our knowledge, this question hitherto has been loosely handled, and the view which we bring forward seems to have been overlooked. Theologians perceiving that the Levitical body, in some respects, stood distinguished from the mass of the nation, did not carefully enquire in what the difference consisted, and pitched upon the opinion flattering to their own order, that whilst the house of Israel represented the Church in general, the house of Aaron stood for the Clergy. We consider this notion to be unsound, shallow and injurious; on the other hand, we believe that if the view of the question to which we have referred could be well developed, and carried out to its results, that holiness and freedom would be the offspring. Instead of thinking, then, that the Levites stand

for the clergy, we are satisfied that they exhibit the priestly element that exists in every believer, whatever be his station in the church. We found the opinion upon many circumstances, of which the following are specimens.—The first-born represent the nation, but whatever was the extent of the meaning which they expressed, the Levitical body stood for as much. In considering the tribe of Levi to be the type of a doctrine, and that doctrine to be the priestly part of the Christian, the harmony of interpretation is maintained—a natural image is found in the old economy, which is rendered by a spiritual thought in the new economy. Whereas, if a class of men in one dispensation, is to be explained by a class of men in the other, type and antitype are *of the same texture*, are both carnal, and philosophy is violated. Further, passages are to be found in both sections of the bible, which are intelligible on our view, but which do not furnish a coherent idea upon the common interpretation. Those passages of the Old Testament, which in the same breath address the house of Israel, and the house of Aaron, or again those texts of the New Testament, which speak of the saint as an Israelite, and as a priest, and which seem to employ the two names as if they were convertible terms, such scriptures appear to coincide easily with the evangelical notion, but to present an insuperable obstacle to the formal view. On the supposition that the Levites mean the clergy, what construction is to be put upon the passage in Peter, where the same persons are spoken of by the different titles—a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, and a peculiar people? On the same supposition, what idea are we to affix to those scriptures, of which there are several, wherein a great number render thanks to the Lamb, that he has made them “kings and priests unto God?” Are we to say of the first passage, that the names, chosen genera-

tion, royal priesthood, and peculiar people, apply only to the *clergy*; are we to affirm of the other texts, that the vast multitude that they introduce to our notice, is made up of *ministers* alone? Again, the distinction between a natural and a converted man is *real*, and it is of sufficient importance to be the subject of symbolic institution;—whereas the distinction between a minister and another man is *formal*, and does not imply any thing absolute, since the man not an ecclesiastic may be the saint, and the ecclesiastic may be the sinner. Further, the idea of a spiritual man is *one*—its unity may be expressed by the terms, one faith, one Lord, one Baptism; the person to whom this applies is the product of a work, which is the same in all cases; he is the result of the eternal decrees of the father, the death of the son, and the teaching of the holy spirit. Being thus definite, the thought is capable of being rendered by an absolute symbol. But the idea of a clergyman is very various; no two sects agree what it is that constitutes him, and therefore he cannot be indicated by a fixed type. A Levite, a definite being, expresses in a very intelligible manner, the characteristics that must and do enter into every saint; but how can he indicate the qualities that constitute ministers, seeing that they are so heterogeneous and contradictory? When we compare the descriptions that point out the peculiarities of the Levitical body, with those others that speak of the graces that ought to adorn the spiritual man, we perceive a series of passages that concatenate—that agree together as type and antitype; but when we compare together the account of the priesthood of the Old Testament, with the clergy of the modern church, we attempt to find a resemblance between unity and variety—between the real and the formal—between the fixed and the capricious—between the definite and the variable—between what is *cere-*

monially pure, and that which is often *actually* impure. In Numbers, Deuteronomy, and other parts of the Old Testament, we have a full description of all matters that have reference to the Levites. Thus, without pretending to give a complete narrative of all things that relate to them, we are told the age at which they may enter on their service, the particular duties that devolve on them, how they are to be consecrated, how the lamps are to be lighted, what relation they bear to the tabernacle, what portion of the sacrifices they are to have for food, how and where they are to eat their portion, how the unclean are to be purified, the families and number of the Levites, the forty-eight cities in which they are to dwell, the six of them that are to be set apart as cities of refuge. In Deuteronomy, we see the functions of the Levites thus succinctly stated: "At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless in his name unto this day." The people are commanded not to forsake the Levite, the Lord is described as the inheritance of the Priests and Levites, the Priests are exhorted to encourage the people when they go into battle, the book of the Law is delivered to the Levites to keep. In Joshua we see the part that the priests took in the crossing the Jordan, we behold the Lord and his sacrifices described as the inheritance of Levi, we notice the forty-eight cities that are assigned to the Levites. Without attempting to specify more minutely, we have the functions of this class detailed in all things that relate to the tabernacle with its services, to altars, offerings, victims, purifications, and holy days.

The church, as we have previously remarked, is profoundly ignorant of the figures of the Pentateuch; but it may be said to be in possession of the most general ideas

that some of them express. In regard to this subject of the Levitical priesthood, although its details have not been examined, certain leading points may be said to be determined and allowed. As far as this is the case, we do not find any difficulty in reconciling the shape of the figure, with the known and admitted qualities of the believer.—To specify a little—the name Levi is rendered, *who is held, joined, or associated*. It is easy to find a co-relative thought to this, in the economy of the saint, and we have it in the fact that he is joined to the divine head of the church, and in the other circumstance of the essential unity of the body of Christ. There was a case of distinct *election* when Levi was appointed to minister before the Lord; and in this event we have a circumstance of the constitution of the saint, so well known, that it is unnecessary to do more than refer to it. The sphere in which the Levites moved was in and about the temple; and when it is borne in mind that this building was a picture of the church of Christ, this fact becomes indicative of the state of communion which it becomes the christian to maintain with his maker. The costume of the Levite was peculiar and regulated in all its parts—and in each one of the details it has already been found as suitable to the life of faith, as the pieces of armour which Paul enumerates are symbolic of the Christian warfare. The keeping of the book of the law was committed to the Levites; and when it is recollected that the spiritual man only can understand and explain the oracles of God, we have a ready counterpart to the typical fact. To this class was entrusted the slaying of the victims and the making of the offerings; and Scripture spares us the trouble of speculating what this can mean, when speaking of believers, it enjoins them to present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is their reasonable service; or when it

says of them, "Ye also as lively stones, are built up a
 " spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual
 " sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." The
 Levites do not seem to have laboured at the ordinary avo-
 cations of life; and how readily do we get a counterpart
 to this fact, in the circumstance, that the believer is in-
 vited to rest in Christ, not to love the world, and to look
 not to the things which are seen and temporal, but to
 those which are unseen and eternal! The Levites were
 under the direction of a High Priest, who exercised func-
 tions peculiar to himself; how correctly does this repre-
 sent the relation in which the believer stands to the Re-
 deemer! The Levites kept up a perpetual servicenight
 and day, and that they might do so were divided into
 twenty-four courses; how finely does this exhibit the con-
 tinuity of that true religion which the spirit implants, and
 that devotedness of heart which the Scriptures enjoin!—
 By taking the Levitical body in this thoroughly symbolic
 sense, no difficulties seem to be incurred. The method
 of interpretation that in other cases is pursued, and gives
 a good result, is followed; a natural fact is converted into
 a spiritual thought. Prosecuting this course, the name
 of the tribe gives forth one doctrine, the circumstances in
 which it was chosen emanate another,—the place where
 they ministered, the separate functions which they exer-
 cised, each point in short associated with their natural
 history, is easily translated into a doctrine of a canonical
 sort. In this way, and by a road which coincides with
 authorised hermenentics, an evangelical result is obtained.
 The symbol is found to depict the congregation of the
 saints, their election to the divine life, their communion
 with heaven, the qualities of their character, the nature of
 their feelings. The sentiment is large, it harmonises with
 the rest of Scripture, it tends to liberty and to holiness.

The Christian who would use this myth as a mirror in which to survey himself, would find himself reminded of his duties and his privileges in a dramatic and convincing manner. He would be led to regard this as a valuable thought added to the list of his opinions. By taking the symbol in the *ecclesiastical* sense, the results are quite different. A large amount of type is spoiled. A considerable section of Scripture is made to support an inclination which needs no encouragement, the inclination of one man to lord it over his fellows. The broad plan of interpretation is thrown aside, a natural fact in the old economy is rendered by another natural fact in the new, a visible order is translated by another visible order, Jewish garments by Christian garments, a building in Palestine by buildings all over the world, carnal ceremonies by others as carnal, appointments that Jehovah instituted by others that men have invented; the definite is rendered by the variable, that which is one by that which is multi-form. What opposite systems! How different are the two ideas, that the Levites represent ministers who may be either this or that, and that they stand for saints who must be of one genus and of no other! How dissimilar the two views, that the temple, a divinely planned edifice, is the type of modern Chapels, which may be of any size, shape and material, and that it represents the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth! What an interval between the two thoughts, that the constant services of the temple enjoin us to be ever frequenting some edifice of religion, and that it is the essence of spiritual communion to aim at the perpetual and all pervading! How remote are the two notions, that these Levitical garments so punctiliously arranged, set forth the principle that our ministers cannot be too attentive to their decorations and vestments, and that they tell us in a pic-

torial manner, of the several graces that constitute the righteousness of saints ! How wide apart are the two thoughts, that the antitype of the altar and the sacrifices is the eating of a wafer, the bending of a knee, an attitude, a rite, and the other view that makes it to be virtuous sentiments, right words, pious deeds, a holy life !— From the one opinion proceeds liberty and the man of God thoroughly furnished unto all good works ; from the other is got superstition, ignorance, tyranny, sensuality, old cloaks, and holy days. The one view devises the means by which religion may be poured into human hearts ; the other amuses itself with contrivances by which holiness may be ascribed to buildings, upholstery, uniforms, postures, and bad men.

The effect that in our judgment would arise from taking the broad view of the Levitical body, would be one which would be subversive of a formal priesthood. Men would reason thus : all true ministers must be found within the circle of *election*, because any thing without that pale has neither part nor lot in the matter ; but the Levites in a sense compose that circle, therefore all true ministers must be Levites. To set up a ministry of a definite form, separate from the Levitical order, is to declare that that diagram does not exhibit all characteristics essential to the Church of God ; is to erect two antagonist ideas, one of which must necessarily destroy the other. Let both thoughts be recognised, and we might see a formal class that was aware that it was up to the mark, bearding another body composed of those who had God's seal upon their foreheads ; and since both were acknowledged, the saints would be forced to submit to the dictation of these others, of faultless costume and blameless pedigree. Indeed this is not a suppositious case, but is rather the picture of what has been occurring for ages. Let it be

admitted that Scripture lays down regulations for rearing up a Church, distinct from those doctrinal injunctions of vital importance that most men allow to be essential to religion, and the necessary consequence is a company of two armies, both asserting a divine commission, and each hating the other with a bitter hatred. We cannot see how this cardinal evil is to be obviated by any other means than the principle which we advocate, and which may be enunciated thus. God in ancient times had a temple, and men who ministered in it. But in this map are displayed all the agencies requisite for the continuance of his Church. But in the chart nothing formal is to be found; all its provisions have regard to *moral* facts; therefore the Church is to be perpetuated not by what is lineal and geometrical, but by what is moral. This circle includes all the instruments and methods necessary to the transmission of the true Church; but in the catalogue there is nothing ceremonial; every provision conducts to a doctrine, a reality, therefore in the propagation of religion there is no provision for the formal, *but the formal is allowed to take its shape from the moral*. There is no beggarly account of attitudes and haberdashery, but there is a noble catalogue of substantial principles, and these are left to find their own uniform. Any man who has mind enough to understand how in literature a grand thought, will, because of its essential texture, shape itself into a noble expression, can also comprehend how God, by making provision for moral sentiments merely, could thereby take the only sure method of rearing up a symmetrical Church. And any one who in letters has perceived the poor effects of the opposite method; any one who has observed the result that takes place when the attempt is tried from without, when the endeavour is made to superinduce or lay on a style, will understand how it might happen in religion.

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that to determine the form, and not to let it proceed from the thought, would conduct to consequences as pernicious. We believe that the Bible has defined with great precision and care, the sentiments which the man of God ought to feel, and the line of action which it is his duty to pursue. We are convinced that this is the solution of all the types that revolve round the Levitical priesthood. We are satisfied that the things which were ceremonies to them, are doctrines to us. We are also of opinion, not merely that this would conduct to a shapely Church, but that it is the only worthy means of coming at that end.—We think, both from what we learn from the Bible, and from the history of the churches, and from the general works of God, that if the religious commonwealth would receive into its bosom the principles of eternal rectitude contained in the Scriptures, the result would come out not only in knowledge and holiness, but in perfect symmetry and order; for this is the principle that we see observed in the other kingdoms. In other departments we perceive that God gives to the *germ* or *nucleus* that character, which, working from the centre outward, terminates in a flower, a tree, a crystal, or an animal of determinate form. Is it not competent to him in the economy of the gospel kingdom, to cause the same method to eventuate in the like effects? On the other hand, it is our deliberate judgment, that to allow men to suppose that there is a catalogue of forms that should have place in religion, is to ensure a church that will have nothing but a shape, and that very generally will not possess even that much. The reason of this is, that shadows and ceremonies are very pleasing to the triviality of human nature.—A change of heart is not requisite in order to observe them. To have a body and limbs are the only postulates essential to this sort of religion. Hence let the smallest

room be given for the idea that such things are pleasing to God, and suddenly there starts up a shape calling itself a church, an object full of attitudes, but without a heart, and generally without a head. The surveys that we take of history, conduct us to the conclusion that the two things are morally incompatible ; that the one idea is subversive of the other. In all churches that have existed hitherto, the attempt has been made to reconcile the two principles ; in all the idea has prevailed, that scripture along with a code of doctrine, sets forth a distinct code of what is called *discipline*. Hence, there never yet has been a church in which true religion has been to the other elements, any thing more than a very minute fraction. At the present moment, and at a time when all religious societies declare that they never were in a more flourishing condition, no honest man pretends to say that there is much more than some brick and mortar in all this outward show. Let each sect be judged by the other, and the verdict given, will be, many ministers, many men, many women, many ceremonies, many words, little reality. This, in a great degree, proceeds from the principle to which we have adverted, the attempt to reconcile the form and the doctrine. These societies are the exemplification of this ; they consecrate their form, they adore their scaffolding—and the consequence is, that one is astonished if he discovers a good man or two connected with the concern. In the meantime there can be no check to this—for as even those who might be disposed to shew up the hollowness of the matter, are themselves under the influence of the opinion that there are such things as divine forms distinct from divine realities ; they cannot strike a blow with all their might. We allow that if all men were holy by nature, it might be possible to suffer them to enjoy a mechanical form of church government without incur-

ring the risk of leading them out of the way ; it would act then as an impediment, it would not act as a complete barrier. But in the circumstances in which men really are, to give them a set of doctrines and a ritual, with the notion that both are revealed, is to furnish them with a divine sanction to continue unregenerate, is to enable them to be religious without undergoing the process of conversion. Nor can it be pretended that this happens only from time to time ; it is the broad rule, and any thing else is the rare exception. The mechanism by which this result is effected, is obvious ; the process of reasoning by which the conclusion is arrived at, may be stated thus—We are informed that it is an act of piety to consecrate one day in seven, that the edifice used for religious assemblies is the house of God, that the minister who convenes them is a divinely appointed ambassador of Jesus Christ, that baptism by water and the communion in bread and wine are seals of a covenant, that the regulations of the society to which we belong, are from heaven ; we receive this, and consider that in conforming to this much we have religion enough. It is of no use that you inform those who act thus that they have embraced only a part of the gospel ; you have already furnished them with such strong arguments for believing that the part which they do adopt is of immeasurable importance, that they take you at your word and refuse to receive any more. There are at this moment many millions who profess christianity ; in the number, is there one in the thousand whose religion is any thing more than this ? The view which alledges that the ceremonies of the Levitical priesthood when translated into their spiritual meaning, amount to the sentiments and conduct suitable to the christian, seems to be free from objections of this kind. In arriving at this opinion, it makes use of that mode of interpretation which the most

pious interpreters have, with admitted success, applied to other parts of the Old Testament. It procures doctrines from rites, it makes provision for a ministry that will be coincident with the elect, the real priesthood, *it comes at the form through the thought*, it works from a centre outward, it says let there be life first, and let the life give the shape. It stipulates for saving faith, and considers that in planting it, all the rest is brought about.

The other view, that which makes arrangements for a code of doctrine and a code of discipline, does not even attain its own chief object; it does not effect the metallic conformity at which it aims. If it induces one portion of society to adopt its manual exercise in all its stringency, it drives other portions to set up competing manœuvres.—It produces frequently more opposition than acquiescence. Whilst it fails in its principal design, it furnishes to the badness of human nature so fair a plea for eschewing true religion, that almost all men take advantage of it; whilst it does not succeed to any great extent in introducing its police measures, it prevents godliness from pressing its claims in such a manner as to force attention. It is guilty of the shallow pedantry of supposing that true doctrine *is not able to work out a fit shape for itself*. It proceeds upon the sophistical method of the rhetorician, who should hope to make his pupils orators by rule, all the while that he had given no endeavour to ascertain whether they were in possession of any knowledge, or had faculties to use it. It tells the style to give laws to the thought, instead of permitting the thought to produce the style. It has not worked well in any direction. The contending factions into which the church is rent, declare loudly that it has not been able to introduce uniformity of shape. The tendency that there is for these parties to multiply, says plainly that it is coming no nearer to its

aim. The degree of importance which each sect attaches to its framework, the all absorbing influence which this exerts, tells audibly that whilst it does not produce conformity, it brings in Phariseism, hypocrisy and death on all sides. In any other matter but religion men would allow that the evidence of many centuries had some meaning, and should exert some influence. Were it not a question of religion, when they looked back and saw that in all time past men have been satisfied to lean upon the scaffolding which ecclesiastics furnished them, and to care for nothing more; when they looked around them and perceived that this is the case at present, when they observed that the opinions in regard to discipline might vary indefinitely, but that vary as they would they led always to the same results, and produced only formalists and bigots; they would arrive at very broad conclusions as to something radically bad in the system. Being a question not of *science*, but of *religion*, superstition interferes, and all the result that follows, is some trivial modification in some unimportant part of the framework.

Ideas similar to those which we now advance, have been urged in former times; but hitherto, ecclesiastics have been able to hinder their influence, by making it appear that they are opposed to what is called a *visible Church*; and that being so they are subversive of religion. As an offset to this statement, one might well put the question, can any thing be much more hostile to religion than the present views and practices which lead all men to profess without leading many to believe? The ruse, however, has succeeded; men have allowed themselves to be persuaded that those who maintain that Scripture does not impose a code of discipline apart from a plan of doctrine, are enemies to an outward confederation, and that being so they are by consequence hostile to divine truth. Even

now the statement could not be plainly laid before the public, that what we call ordinances are unconverted types, and that they should be rendered into doctrines, without drawing down upon the propounder the obloquy of being represented as an infidel at heart. The formal priests considering that their craft was in danger, would sound, or rather hint and whisper an alarm, and society would be led to the charge, not against a man who had peculiar ideas on certain points, but against one who was described as an enemy to revealed religion. Even those who half suspect that these ordinances are ceremonies that have no right to continue on their present footing, are unwilling to hear anything said against them, and whenever they are impugned, enter on the defence by saying, we must have something to rally round. The difficulty in our judgment, is a pure invention. It is got up by those whose theology being but a beggarly account of empty boxes, a sterile catalogue of dead forms, they are resolved that the nakedness of the land shall not be exposed. No man who has Christ formed within him the hope of glory, need be upset by these ideas about ordinances, be they true or false, because in losing them he does not lose his all.— But it is not so with the great mass of those who compose the visible Church; their standing, their reputation, their name for sanctity, their vast income, their peace of mind, being derived from will-worship, and not from the spirit of God, it is not to be supposed that they will see their all taken from them without many a feint and many a struggle. Is it true, then, that these things are necessary to the existence of a Church on the earth; or is it not rather the case that they are essential to the existence of a false Church? It is found that other branches of knowledge continue and flourish without the help of a ceremonial apostolic succession. Astronomy or painting does not re-

quire a class of men pretending to an external commission to teach it; it is found to be sufficient for their advancement that there should be persons who have obviously an aptitude for these studies. The aptitude is perceived, it is developed by suitable instruction, it leads its possessor to a career in which he advances his art in proportion to the strength of his tendency; it procures for him fame, occupation and income. How would it fare with these arts, if men, instead of looking for an *aptitude*, looked for a *commission*? Would not their attention be drawn away from a reality to a fiction, and would not the result be, that merit would be passed by, and that persons would be encouraged who were *commissioned* to execute their task in the vilest manner? Does this remark not apply to the religious world? They look for a commission, and formalists are the result. They ask by what authority doest thou these things, and pretenders are what they gain by it. Is that a good system, and is this a prosperous estate, in which teachers who are not themselves taught, are notoriously the almost invariable feature?—When such are the fruits, have we any great reason to triumph as if we had found the true principle by which to rear a visible Church; when such things prevail all around, are we entitled to denounce a new proposition as inadmissible before it is tried, nay before it is heard? We advance these opinions with respect to the Levitical priesthood with the feeling, not that they are subversive of a visible Church, but on the contrary with the intimate persuasion that there can be no solid building until they are generally adopted. It is our opinion that as far as things have gone as yet, a visible church in the real sense of the term, has not been realised. There is no unity in the erection, for each day shews us some new principle of dissent that refuses to dwell within the old enclosure. There

is little reality about it, for by the confession of all pious persons, the fruits which it usually produces, are tame devotees and open infidels. If it possesses neither unity nor sincerity; if it is split into many sections, and if the members of these are usually mere politicians, what cause is there for excessive alarm at the mention of a change? It might be better, it could not easily be worse. On what principle is the statement based, that to abrogate certain formal notions, is to do away with the possibility of a visible Church? Any one of the sciences is rendered palpable enough without ceremonies. A professor, a lecture room, an outline of subjects, an attendance of students; that is found enough to keep the science in life, and to make it bear very evident fruits. It is thought sufficient that the teacher be well qualified, that his instructions be given with precision and method. By this means communication takes place between mind and mind; and the pupils carry the subject a little further forward than their master. It is not considered essential that the science should be taught with pretensions to a formal divine commission, in an edifice which has an inherent sanctity, on a day which is supposed to add holiness to the transaction, and in connection with rites which appear to have no meaning, which certainly have no good results, but which nevertheless are represented as of heavenly origin. Is there that about religion which makes all these things essential to its being? We firmly believe not. So far from then from thinking that a church could not be visible, that is to say could not have a corporate shape, in the absence of rites and of a *formal* priesthood, we consider that our views would render it more visible than ever, and that to a good purpose. At present, although it is visible, it is very generally in the shape of a visible evil. We have no doubt that to realise the opinions which we advance

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would be to give it a being as a visible good. Let the idea gain ground that scripture from first to last has its eye upon a determinate body, but that this body is neither more nor less than the elect people. Let it be considered that to set up another line along side of this, is to erect an antagonist principle, which has always been found deadly to the other. Let it be esteemed a fixed position that the object of the Levitical body, was not to represent a people or a class distinct from the elect; but to represent the whole elect in their *priestly* character. Let it be deemed that this tribe was chosen to exhibit this doctrine for the simple reason, that to have employed the whole nation in the work would have been incompatible with the exigencies of human nature. Let it be esteemed to be our proper object to discover the doctrines couched under the ceremonies which the Levites performed, and not to repeat the ceremony over again. Let it be considered that all the arrangements of Scripture relative to the procuring of teachers for the churches, were subordinate to the larger plan by which God chose a people, and that all such were selected because of the circumstance that they belonged, or were to belong, to the elect nation. Let it be ascertained that whether it was Paul, or Barnabas, or Timothy that was appointed to teach the truth, he was nominated to this office either because he was already a partaker in divine grace, or was destined soon to become so, and not because of any connection that he had with any formal genealogy or class. Let it be broadly affirmed, that the Bible appointed men to be teachers because they were Levites, that is to say believers; not because they were links of a chain that had nothing but some suppositious qualities to recommend it. Let it be thought that to select teachers because they are of the elect, is a direct encouragement to true religion, whereas to choose them because

they correspond to some formal criterion, is but to make a fair show in the flesh, and is a deadly poison poured into the system of the churches; let such ideas prevail, and let them take the direction of the conduct, and the results must be wholesome. The first temple was built by the combined efforts of Jew and Gentile; the Gentile went for more in it than the Jew; the second temple was erected by Jews alone, no Gentile was permitted to mix himself up with the work. Anything that we have as yet seen in the Church corresponds with the history of the first temple; the opinions which we advocate in regard to the priesthood, if received, would help to bring in the events of the second temple. Hitherto the very theory of religion has sanctioned and even hailed the co-operation of the heathen, and hence the churches have been deluged with ministers and members, who agreeing with the required form, and evincing a willingness to help out the general objects, were not merely tolerated but caressed. The views that we propose seem at least to exhibit a good theory. Men would contravene them beyond doubt, but in doing so they would not be able to justify themselves by the very constitution of the Church. Religion in this system would not shew itself as at present, positively anxious, to assist the world in feigning. If wolves continued to enter the fold, it would not be because the sheep told them to come in. The Christian teacher having nothing adventitious to lean upon; being no longer propped up by the notion of an apostolic order, or by the fiction of holy rites, or by the idea of holy places and holy days would be under an obligation to possess real knowledge and vital piety. If he had not these, he would be considered to have nothing. He might still deceive, but how small would be his facilities compared with what they are now. The demand would be, let us have real Levites

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and let these be wiser than the people in the proportion that the knowledge of the teacher should exceed that of the disciple. To those who object that all this might be counterfeited, we reply that it might be, but that it is more difficult to imitate a wise and good man, than to be a priest according to the plumb line of a formal sect. The people too, would greatly benefit by the exchange. Ceasing to attach holiness to pedigree, gowns, rites, places and days, they would be strongly urged to inquire in what it really consisted. Finding that it lay in a new heart and its effects, many would be induced to examine into these particulars, who at present are quite stupified and deadened by the rite. As soon as it was clearly ascertained that religion was an arena for any degree of intelligence, and that it was no sphere for pedantic ceremony, it would become respectable; and whatever sceptics might alledge against it, they would no longer be able to name it a stupid imposture, fit only for the gaping rabble. If men ceased to assemble in their meeting houses to see signs, and to gaze at mummeries, they would demand something mental; if their senses were no longer to be amused, they would ask food for the mind. If they forsook the see-saw and rotatory movements which ceremonies produce, they would naturally in many instances make trial of the progressive movement. If they abandoned the system which glories in keeping men what they are, and which effects this by habituating them early to fictions, they would frequently go for the plan which proposes to carry them forward from strength to strength, and from glory to glory. But when the opinion fairly prevailed, that religion is a spiritual and mental exercise, and that these ceremonies which now encumber it are admirable doctrines untrammelled, it is impossible to say how great and rapid would be the progress. There being nothing then to stand in

reflection, the thought would become general; our teachers must prove their title in the same manner that the professors of any other science evince their ability; they must unroll the chart, they must develop their volume; they must extract from it "things new and old;" we can no longer indulge them and ourselves, in a circular career that is never to end. What a criterion would this be, to distinguish between the true and the false apostle! But if religion became the theatre of unfettered thinking, it would by the same token become the parent of boundless action. Men having discovered that there was no essential goodness in frequenting places, and going the round of the same rites, would be forced to enquire what was really virtuous. What enormous results might we not anticipate from such a change; would it not deserve the name of a moral revolution? When the bulletin, Christ Jesus expects that every man this day will do his duty, was heard and understood; when those fallacies that now take the attention off were put aside, what manner of men might we not expect to spring up in the churches! When regeneration and its effects became topics generally canvassed; when the present skulking places that enable a man to escape conversion, or that make his conversion to amount to nothing in conduct, when these were abolished, what a new race might we not look for! But if the high moralities of the bible became subjects of general study; if there was nothing in the theory of the churches to prevent them from being driven home upon the attention; if the investigation of revealed ethics became common; if the imitation of Christ became a canon, an operative principle; if each man who professed was moral in a distinguishable degree; if very many were so in such a degree as that it was plain that they had been with Jesus; if the Church rapidly ascending to knowledge and

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 the will and learning the doctrine, she were to find her-
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 thing that distinguished the Apostolic age, would there
 then be any room for the complaint, that in ceasing to be
 ceremonial, she ceased to be visible? Knowledge and vir-
 tue communicate as much visibility to a person or a com-
 munity, as anything that can be imagined. That which
 is promotive of them, is promotive of the visibility of a
 Church. If our doctrines are more productive of these
 qualities, than present ideas, they tend not to destroy but
 to give being to a visible Church. We allow that did our
 opinions prevail, the religious commonwealth might be
 much less visible in the matter of lofty spires, fretted
 aisles, stained windows, haughty ecclesiastics, unconvert-
 ed ministers, and superstitious devotees; but are these
 things essential; might not these customs be more ho-
 noured in the breach than in the observance? It is a so-
 phism to say of opinions that they are subversive of a vi-
 sible Church, unless it can be proved that they are un-
 scriptural, and also that they are opposed to the growth
 of intelligence and true holiness. If it can be shewn that
 they are not hostile to these qualities, but on the contrary
 are directly calculated to cherish them, then their influ-
 ence will be to give permanence and distinctness to a re-
 ligious community. They may force it to alter the cha-
 racter of its visibility, they may compel it to be visible for
 good deeds, instead of being visible for pageantry and
 vice, but do they in this render it less visible or less wor-
 thy? Opinions whose tendency is to bring the heavens
 nearer to the earth, to render the intercourse between
 God and man less circuitous, to augment indefinitely the
 amount of knowledge, to elevate the moral standard im-

measurably above its present level, to render the number of those who are truly godly, vastly greater than it has ever been, to make the quality of their piety greatly superior to what now obtains, to cause man to be a more respectable being in all the relations of life, to increase the quantity of freedom, to diminish the amount of misery and crime; opinions which promise even in a remote degree, to bring about these results, cannot have the disposition to take visibility from the churches. They are indeed very capable of being misrepresented, they are subversive of much that now exists, they are opposed to many rooted and time-honoured prejudices; but if they are friendly to knowledge and spiritual Christianity, they are in the same degree favourable to a visible Church. If they tend to put the administration of religion into the hands of the wisest and best of the elect, and to prevent any others from assuming the direction, if they go to abrogate so far as is possible all refuges of lies, if they are promotive of the *real* and subversive of the *apparent*; if they strive after a religion, that coming down from heaven, would be free from monopolies and embargoes, and would have the unquestioned right to grow, without the interference of interested mustis, in the proportion that they contemplate these results; are they the sincere supporters of a visible Church.

There is another objection which is sometimes urged against the opinions that we advocate; those who are not able to bring against them any more serious charge, say that they are inimical to *order*. We reply without fear, that this cannot be substantiated until a graver sin can be proved against them. We admit that they might in some instances put order to flight, where the life was wanting; we allow that where corporations are built up without the spirit, where they are held together by the iron bands of

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a carnal superstition, that such things might be torn asunder by the entrance of these principles. But have such confederations any right to hold together ; is it to speak evil of our ideas to say of them, that they might blow up such dens of villainy ? In no other sense, do we believe, that it could be said of them with truth, that they are hostile to order. Are they the very mind of God, so far as they go ? Unless the contrary can be proved, the charge cannot be made out. The ruler of the universe is a God of order. The principle is conspicuous in the smallest of his works. Is there any thing less important than a drop of water, or a particle of snow, yet the one is an exact sphere, and the other a regular crystal. But if order comes down so low as this, it cannot be wanting in any dogma connected with the structure of the church, which the son of God purchased with his blood. Before it can be proved that our ideas strike at order, it must be shewn that they are not of God. It cannot be allowed that they are of him, and at the same time that they lead to disorder. The two thoughts are incompatible. Let it be admitted that they are the mind of the spirit, and it follows by necessary consequence, that they tend to order. There is some small amount of order in the churches even now, with the minute degree of godliness that is diffused through them—whereby we see that the holy spirit cannot be even slightly present on the earth, without carrying along with him some portion of his essential qualities. Are these ideas of ours calculated to advance the kingdom of heaven on the earth ? If they are so, and in the measure that they are so, are they adapted and destined to increase the amount of true evangelical order in the churches ?

CHAPTER VII.

THE IDEA IN PSALMODY.

"Speaking TO YOURSELVES in Psalms, and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing, and making melody IN YOUR HEART to the Lord."—EPH. V. 19.

The psalms are certainly better understood than the Pentateuch ; they are quite as well understood as the historical books of the Old Testament ; and they are probably not so well understood as that portion which is termed the prophets. The conclusion from this is, that we must be in the infancy of our knowledge respecting them.—They have had a fair share of attention. If they have not been more investigated than other parts of the bible, they have attracted about as much notice as any other section. The treatises that have been written upon them have been of *two kinds*. In the one they have been canvassed with an eye to their poetry, rhetoric, and language ; in the other they have been examined with reference to their sentiment and doctrine. There has been no lack of works of the first sort ; and topics such as the metre, the figures of speech, and other peculiarities of the structure, have been minutely discussed, both as they are in themselves, and as they stand in comparison with the same features in the productions of secular poets. The very little that we have seen of works of this species, does not give us the smallest wish to know more of them. They have had much share in making men bishops ; but to our mind they are as foolish compositions as any that are usually cited, as the most characteristic of human silliness. The language in which the idea is conveyed, is, more especially in scripture, too intimately blended with the idea itself, to admit

of the one being viewed separately from the other. These critics of the style, have been men to whom the thought was a complete enigma; and all the prolusions they have given to the world have shewn, that being ignorant of the chief topic, they could have few just notions of the subordinate matters. Not only have they displayed want of perception when they attempted to go beyond the limits of the province which they selected as their own; even within what might be considered their own department, their mistakes are numerous and striking. The subtle Bentley, when he proceeded to write a critique upon *Paradise Lost*, was shorn of his former honours; he had learning, but he was without fancy or feeling. So these critics of the style of scripture, after having acquired a name by their glosses on heathen authors, generally deserve to lose it by the manner in which they deal with the word of God. Their scholarship continues—but being employed upon writings whose meaning is hidden from their sight, it only helps to make them contemptible. When they attempt to throw out a suggestion on any subject where the doctrine is involved, they are almost invariably in gross error; but this was to be looked for; the strange thing is that their remarks are frequently unsound, even when they are of a verbal nature, because they are analysing a style which is the casement of an idea that is beyond their apprehension. We are convinced that these opinions respecting writers on the text, would be held more generally than they are by believers, were it not that spiritual men are very commonly prone to excessive sentiment, actuated much more by feeling than by intelligence, frequently indisposed to severe thought, and therefore very apt to indulge in wonderment at the mental prowess of those, who speak of such mysterious topics as, strophe, antistrophe, paralellism, and who because of their skill in these, have been promoted

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to be Lords over the heritage. We consider that works of this kind are often useless, frequently worse than useless, produce a pernicious effect because of the mysterious prestige in their favour, and have few good features about them, unless it be that their sterile, pedantic, and expensive character, confines them to a limited circle of readers. Such productions inform us of some few curiosities in the structure of the Psalms; but we doubt much whether they impart one thought, by which the spiritual temple is likely to be reared.

The other class of writings have had a different effect, and have put us in possession of any valuable knowledge that we have of this part of Scripture. Their principal object has been to determine the doctrine, or to draw it out to practical uses. Their authors have been men who sympathised with the spirit of the Bible. Borrowing from the others, and often foolishly, their notions in regard to subjects purely literary, they have drawn their ideas about the sentiment from a purer source. Hence there is often a strong contrast between the weakness of their exegetical criticism, and the solidity of their notices upon the doctrine. With all their defects they have brought together some important information. At an early period it struck interpreters of this kind, that such references as they had already found in the prophets to the kingdom of Christ, were to be looked for in the Psalms. Jesus himself warrants this supposition, when he shewed the disciples out of the Psalms the things concerning himself.—The like expectation was justified by the circumstances of the author. Eminently evangelical in his character, confessedly a distinguished type of Messiah, his progenitor according to the flesh, was it to be anticipated that he would be silent on a theme which engages so much of the attention of the other sacred penmen? Setting out from

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these premises, many pious commentators have carefully gone over the ground, and have endeavoured to interpret each one of these compositions in such a manner as to shew its connection with the New Testament Church.—Whilst we warmly sympathise with the critics who have prosecuted this spiritual enquiry, we think it right to mention it as our opinion, that they have dealt with the subject in a manner too narrow and formal. The Kingdom of Christ, means a very great deal more than the transactions connected with the terrestrial history of its founder. It means the entire series of events, that shall occur until time shall be no more. Now the error to which we advert, consists in overlooking this fact, and in so dealing with the Psalms, as if they could contain no reference but to this small section of the great history. This is the mistake that pervades the plan of interpretation which Horne attempted to erect; and this is also the fallacy which runs through the whole system of a far greater and better man, Matthew Henry. Those who have adopted this method, have weakly supposed that they could not be evangelical, unless they extracted from the Psalms, ideas in all instances coincident with the events in the mortal life of Jesus Christ. Out of this narrow theory have sprung some of the chief difficulties that have attended the doctrinal exposition of the Psalms; and in our judgment the subject must continue to be encumbered with insuperable obstacles, until it be subjected to a criterion that is much more ample. If these compositions embrace all that variety of topics which we believe that they comprehend; if along with references that are peculiarly applicable to the earthly career of Messiah, they take in many of those innumerable facts that are to transpire until the era that he comes, the second time, without sin unto salvation; if they pourtray to our view all the various modes of feeling

to which the individual believer is liable, and all the various situations in which the collective church is to be placed from the beginning down to the end ; if instead of striking but one note, they give us all the tones that can be produced by the harp of Sion, that must be a confined theory which sought to bring out but one idea where there were so many.

The state of our knowledge of these compositions, may be comprised within the following particulars. We are aware in a general manner, that spiritual ideas are contained in these writings, in common with the other scriptures. We have already appropriated a meaning to many isolated passages ; and more especially to any that appear capable of being applied to the incidents in the life of Christ. Evangelical interpretation has proceeded thus far, that probably there are not many of them that have altogether escaped from it. In most of them there are at least one or two passages, that have been spiritualised in one way or other. About as many edifying and moral-reflections have been drawn from this book, as from any other of the scriptures of the Old Testament. On the other hand, no catholic scheme has been applied, which beginning with a summary view of the intention of the whole, has proceeded to analyse the details in a manner that harmonises with the general theory. So much is this the case, that there is a question still under discussion, that must have been already solved, were we in possession of any deep or comprehensive knowledge of the book. It is still a disputed point whether David be the sole author, or whether the Psalms are by several writers. Because in one passage we find it stated, that the prayers of David the son of Jesse, are ended ; because there are several of the Psalms whose facts do not correspond with the period of David ; grounded on reasons such as these, there is an

opinion which is entertained by many, that the book is a collection, and that in addition to David, Solomon, Ezra, Nehemiah, and perhaps Isaiah and Jeremiah, were concerned in its composition. How easily might these little difficulties be answered! David says that his *prayers* are ended; how speciously may it be presumed, that he spoke of his Psalms of one kind, and not of them all; how possible might it be to shew, that the pieces which precede this remark of his, are more of the supplicatory sort than those which come after; how natural does it seem to apply the expression to the single Psalm in which it occurs! Again, there are many of these compositions that seem to refer to events subsequent to the time of David; several of them for instance, appear to bear upon the captivity in Babylon. Instead of finding it necessary to suppose that these were written by men, the cotemporaries of the facts referred to, how much more natural to suppose that they are prophecies of David! If he prophesied of some circumstances, as it is generally admitted that he did, where is the difficulty in supposing that he might prophecy of others? The diversity of opinion that exists, relative to this very initial question of the authorship, is one plain proof how superficial is our knowledge in this direction. To be ignorant who it was that wrote the Psalms, is virtually to confess deep ignorance of what is written in them. Hence, with the exception of that very exclusive theory to which we have alluded, which sought to make them all descriptive of the humanity of Christ, we are not aware of any general arrangement that has been attempted, which pretended to give a probable explanation of the whole plan. We are not in possession of any data that enable us to say with decision, the Psalms were written with such and such intentions, they shadow forth feelings of a definite kind, they point to events of a

particular sort. We have not before us a collection of facts sufficient to give us the right to say, this book differs from the other parts of scripture in the following features, it was written with a given object, it is fitted to effect a particular purpose.

Another circumstance that reveals how great must be our ignorance in this department, is this: that although many of the psalms inform us in the title, under what circumstances, or with what intention they were composed, we have been able to derive no instruction from the hint; or we have used it in such a literal manner, as to shew that we did not understand how to extract a doctrine from a type. We cannot think of a better illustration of this fact, than the following: There are fifteen of the psalms that are designated "*Psalms of degrees*;" the name is given not only to the first, but to each in succession. Some theory must be formed to account for a title, that comprehended so many pieces. What should it be? The word degree likewise means a step, but there were steps to the temple, therefore these songs were sung by two battalions of priests, ranged opposite to each other, on the steps leading to the house of God. Lest this ingenious notion might not quite content all minds, another idea quite as probable was brought forward, as an alternative. It is related of good King Hezekiah, that he was seized with a sickness that brought him near to the gates of death. When he was in this predicament, he prayed earnestly that his life might be spared. His suit was granted; and as a sign that fifteen years more of life were to be allowed him, the shadow went back that number of degrees on the dial.—How likely that Hezekiah commemorated this great deliverance; how likely that he wrote a psalm for each year that was spared him; how likely that the fifteen odes which he composed, are those fifteen standing in a collection

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to have been by David ; how much probability is added to this notion when it is further borne in mind, that out of the fifteen, four have the title, "A song of degrees for Solomon!" We give this as a specimen of the deep ignorance in which we are of this book ; and also of the gratuitous assumptions by which we seek to conceal our want of knowledge. Why did it not occur to these theorists, that the philosophical method of opening up Scripture is to get it to explain itself? Adhering to this method in the case in question, might they not have found that these fifteen Psalms really contain what their titles might have led one to expect, a graduated scale of the life of faith? Analysing the several pieces, they might have discovered that the first could easily be regarded as descriptive of that posture of feeling in which the man is, when the knowledge of his fallen condition first breaks in upon him. Whilst the first corresponds with this stage, those that follow might be seen to coincide with those sentiments which other parts of Scripture represent, as the gradations of the spiritual life. Passing from the examination of the fifteen Psalms, it might have occurred to the student, that there are many texts which sanction the idea of an ascending scale, and several which describe its successive degrees. The resemblance between such passages, and these Psalms, might have appeared to strengthen the argument. And further, the reason of the thing might have been called in to enhance this likelihood, and to hold such language as this, Scripture certainly desires that the spiritual man should acquire a determinate character ; but if it does, it seems natural that it should set forth the method in which it is acquired, and the materials out of which it is formed ; if this be the case, and if these Psalms are perceived to exhibit a plan of growth in grace, that agrees either with an *a priori* view, or with

opinions derived from other parts of Scripture, has not a natural solution been found for the problem involved in their name? It would not be difficult to adduce other instances of interpretation, quite as fantastic as the case to which we have pointed. There are several Psalms in which the speaker laments that he is cut off from that pleasant commerce with the divine tabernacles which he once enjoyed; others in which he states the happiness that belongs to him when he frequents the sacred courts; others in which he records the blessedness of the priests who dwell continually within the pleasant precincts; others in which he relates that some great truth was not revealed to him until he went into the Sanctuary; others in which he describes the solidity of the building, the solemnity of the rites, or the help that comes from it to those who look to the hills of holiness with an eye of faith. By a mode of interpretation singularly narrow and absurd, all these high and holy remarks are made to terminate in an antitype greatly inferior to the type; in a Meeting House which is not one, but what you like to make it, for whose erection there was no divine communication, whose procedure is not marked out by revealed directions, in which men do not dwell, and could not dwell for ever, into which one may enter without hearing any remarkable secret, with whose doings there is associated no necessary holiness, to which a man might look long enough without being made aware that any token of heavenly favour had been granted to him. The vast interval between the symbol and the idea derived from it, may fairly be taken as an example of the clumsy interpretation to which the Psalms have been exposed.

Another feature of these compositions, on which as we believe profound ignorance reigns, is that part of them which relates to the manner in which they were to be

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performed, and the instruments by which they were to be accompanied. There are many directions relative to these points. It is quite a common thing to find something in the title, bearing that such a psalm was written for the chief musician, or that it was intended for the sons of Korah, or that it was a psalm for Asaph. In the body of the psalm it is an usual thing to meet with the statement, that the author would praise God on an instrument of six, at other times of ten strings, or to hear him calling upon the faithful to praise God on the harp, the psaltery, or the loud sounding cymbal, the timbrel and the dance. When all such notices are put together, they form a considerable amount of matter. But none of it, as yet, has been reclaimed from a state of type; what is more, we incline to think that it has not even been suspected of being type. Allusions of this kind have produced an effect such as it is; they have impelled the churches at different periods to aim at having a musical department attached to their establishments, constituted on principles similar to that which belonged to the temple. It is probable that the persons who have felt an interest in bringing back the old orchestra, have studied the subject in their own way with considerable minuteness. It is more than likely that their devout antiquarianism may have been at various times crowned with well merited success, in the shape of reproducing Hebrew effects with singular fidelity. It would not require much proof to convince us, that they had succeeded in getting back again the very sounds that were heard in Jerusalem in the days of Ahab, or of the Macabees. We would have no difficulty in crediting them, when they assured us that they rejoiced in the possession of harps strung precisely after the model of that of David. We should believe this, and think after all that labour had been lamentably thrown away. If the whole

old economy is a catalogue of symbols, these instruments of music have their meaning, as well as the other parts.— We do not evince an understanding of this fact, when we shew an anxiety to have the copper, the parchment, and the catgut back again. When we treat them in this manner, we dwell in the symbol, and do not trace it out to its doctrine. The man who shews himself zealous to revive merely the singers and players on instruments, is in our opinion no saner or more discerning, than those scholars of the fifteenth century, who laboured to bring Jupiter and Pan back again; or than those eccentric personages, who lamenting the decline of chivalry, rode forth and mistook wind-mills for giants, and hostelries for enchanted palaces. The respectable man is he, who would sit down before the list of these instruments, and who would canvas the holy and difficult questions, to what do they refer, what is the difference of the value of their several capacities and sounds, by what means shall this heart of mine re-enact the scenes of the temple and discourse to the most high, music more eloquent than that which proceeded from harp or timbrel?

By putting together scattered notices, we collect a tolerable mass of information, relative to the musical department of the temple. In one place we read, "And the King made of the Almug trees pillars for the House of the Lord, and for the King's house, harps also and psalteries for singers." In another place this information is afforded us, "And these are they whom David set over the service of song in the house of the Lord, after that the Ark had rest. And they ministered before the dwelling place of the tabernacle of the congregation with singing, until Solomon had built the House of the Lord in Jerusalem: and then they waited on their office according to their order." In another place, in

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connection with a list of these functionaries, we find it thus written, "And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers were free; for they were employed in that work day and night." In the passage that describes the bringing of the Ark from Obed-Edom, there are several notices respecting the singers and players on instruments, thus, "And David spake to the chief of the Levites, to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps, and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy." After this we are told who those were that "were appointed to sound with cymbals of brass," who those were that played "with psalteries on Alamoth," who those were whose vocation it was "with harps on the Sheminith to excel," and how that "Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, was for song: he instructed about the song because he was skilful;" and towards the end of the description, we read, "And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the Ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps." In another passage, wherein the Levites are numbered, it is stated, "And four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise there-with." In I Chron. XXV. there is very specific mention of these officers. "Moreover David and the Captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries and with cymbals." After a list of names, we find it stated, "All these were

“ under the hands of their father for song in the house of
 “ the Lord, with cymbals, psalteries and harps, for the
 “ service of the House of God, according to the King’s
 “ order to Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman. So the number
 “ of them, with their brethren that were instructed in the
 “ songs of the Lord, even all that were cunning, was two
 “ hundred, four-score and eight.” After this follows an
 account, how these two hundred and eighty eight were
 distributed into twenty four courses of twelve men each.
 In the description which relates the induction of the Ark
 into the oracle or holy of holies, the singers and musicians
 are mentioned,—“ Also the Levites which were the sing-
 “ ers, all of them of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with
 “ their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white
 “ linen, having cymbals, and psalteries, and harps, stood at
 “ the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred
 “ and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. It came
 “ even to pass, as the trumpets and singers were as one
 “ to make one sound to be heard in praising and thank-
 “ ing the Lord ; and when they lifted up their voice with
 “ the trumpets, and cymbals, and instruments of music
 “ and praised the Lord, saying, for he is good ; for his
 “ mercy endureth for ever : that then the house was filled
 “ with a cloud, even the house of the Lord.”

Elsewhere we find it recorded by Jehoshaphat, that
 “ when he had consulted with the people, he appointed
 singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty
 of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say
 Praise the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever. And
 when they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set
 bushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, at
 Mount Seir, which were come against Judah, and they
 were smitten.” And further on in the same narrative
 is added,—“ And they came to Jerusalem with psalteries

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In that passage in second Chronicles, where Athaliah is
described as entering the house of the Lord, we find men-
tion made of the musicians,—“ And all the people of the
land rejoiced, and sounded with trumpets, also the sing-
ers with instruments of music, and such as taught to sing
praise.” When Hezekiah is represented as restoring re-
ligion, and setting the house of the Lord in order, it is
stated, “ And all the congregation worshipped, and the
singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this
continued until the burnt offering was finished.” Where
Josiah is shewn as taking order for the repair of the tem-
ple, we read, “ And the men did the work faithfully:
and the overseers of them were Jahath and Obadiah, the
Levites, of the sons of Merari: and Zechariah and Me-
shullam, of the sons of the Kohathites, to set it forward;
and other of the Levites, all that could skill of instru-
ments of music.” Where the solemn Passover that Jo-
siah kept, is related, it is mentioned as one of the parti-
culars, “ And the singers, the sons of Asaph, were in
their place, according to the commandment of David, and
Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the King’s seer.”—
Where Ezra gives the number of those who return from
Babylon, we find it said,—“ The singers: the children of
Asaph, an hundred, twenty and eight.” And again, “ So
the Priests and the Levites, and some of the people, and
the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinims, dwelt in
their cities, and all Israel in their cities.”

Frequent mention is made of this body of men, in the
books of Ezra and Nehemiah. In one place it is said,
“ Also we certify you, that touching any of the Priests
and Levites, singers, porters, Nethinims, or Ministers of
this House of God, it shall not be lawful to impose toll,
tribute, or custom upon them.” Nehemiah speaks thus,

“ Now it came to pass when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors, and the porters, and the singers, and the Levites were appointed.” Another mention is made of them to this effect, “ Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the House of God. For it was the King’s commandment concerning them, that a certain portion should be for the singers, due for every day.”— They are frequently mentioned in the twelfth chapter,— “ And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps. And the sons of the singers gathered themselves together, both out of the plain country round about Jerusalem, and from the villages of Netophathi: Also from the house of Gilgal, and out of the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had builded the villages round about Jerusalem.” In the same chapter we hear of certain persons who played on “ the musical instruments of David, the man of God, and Ezra to scribe before them.” We are also informed, that “ the singers and the porters kept the ward of their Gate, and the ward of the purification according to the commandment of David, and of Solomon his son. For in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were chief of singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God. And all Israel, in the days of Zerubbabel, and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the portions of the singers and porters, every day his portion.” They are spoken of in the thirteenth chapter likewise,—“ And I perceived that the portions of the Levites had not been given them of the King, and of the Levites, that did the work, were every one to his field.” The sixty eighth Psalm, describing what seems a religious procession, says,

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singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels." The eighty seventh has the following mention of this class,—“As well the singers as the players on instruments shall be there.” Ezekiel in his full description of the temple, does not fail to speak of this body,—“And without the inner gate were the chambers of the singers in the inner Court, which was at the side of the North gate; and their prospect was toward the South: one at the side of the East gate having the prospect toward the North.”

Any further information respecting this class will probably be procured from the Psalms. In the titles more especially, there are frequent notices, which compared together, would throw light on the subject. Without however speaking by anticipation, and availing ourselves of settled points only, we are able to make the following statements,—that the temple had a regular musical department, that it consisted of singers and players on instruments, that it first came into operation in the time of David, that it received further accessions under Solomon, that the compositions which were sung and played, were the one hundred and fifty psalms of David, that the establishment continued until the carrying away into Babylon, that it was again set up after the return from captivity, that the *personnel* consisted of two hundred and eighty eight performers, that these were so arranged as that twelve of the number acted along with each of the courses of the Levites, that by this method the twelve tribes were represented in each of the twenty four hours, that by this plan the music like the other services, knew no intermission day or night. These facts have long been before the churches, but we are not aware that they have been pushed to any doctrinal conclusions. The lovers of shew and cere-

mony, have learned from them their inclination to bring the temple back again. The poor and shallow use that they have made of these important particulars, has been to descant upon the solemnizing influence of grave and melancholy sounds. Now and then, some ecclesiastical antiquary has brought the subject up, in a learned aspect, by publishing a dissertation upon the poetry and music of the Hebrews, in the course of which he presents his readers with pleasant speculations as to what was the scale employed, how many strings there were to the Jewish harp, or what was the precise shape of the dulcimer or psaltery. Disquisitions of this sort might be regarded as respectable, were they in subordination to a spiritual purpose. If they had been made with the intent, that the exact value of the symbol being found, a means might thereby be procured for obtaining a correct doctrinal result, such studies would bespeak a searching and religious mind. But when they are prosecuted for their own sake, when those who enter on them rest in them, they tell of a mind that is lamentably twisted from the straight line of sound sense, they irritate because they intermeddle with high matters and yet bring out base and impotent conclusions, they remind one of that ignoble and weak sort of creature that the poet describes, as being able

“To pore and pore and botanise,
Upon his father's grave”——

Whilst the churches that are the fondest of parade, have thought of the temple music only as a circumstance that led them to bestow a great amount of interest upon such matters, as organs, “flutes and soft recorders,” those that have been the most remarkable for sound views of doctrine, have scarcely given any attention to the subject.—They have discarded the pomp and circumstance of the temple ritual, without providing a substitute. A psalm

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sadly or nasally sung, without instrument to set it off, has been the expression of their views upon the matter. Why has it not occurred to them, that we must have either the type or the doctrine? Since they obviously are not in possession of any solution of the symbols, why do they not seek to retain the symbols themselves? It is strange that they have not perceived, that they were bound to take hold of one or other horn of the dilemma.

We are decidedly of opinion, that in this question, a topic of considerable magnitude claims attention, and that as yet it has received none. We admit in the general, that the rites of the temple worship were mystical; why is not the principle applied to the explanation of each particular part? We allow that the various sacrifices for instance, expressed ideas relating to those spiritual sacrifices which the Christian is expected to offer, on what grounds do we refuse a similar explanation to the *music*? It was not a slight or adventitious fact. It was an essential part of the framework. The pious King of Israel, the ancestor and eminent type of Christ, composes one hundred and fifty odes of admitted piety, full of allegory and doctrine, these are to be chaunted and played in the service of the House of God. The son of this King, as renowned as his father, the architect of the sacred building, completes the arrangements. The instruments to be used are specified, two hundred and eighty eight Levites are appointed to play or sing; they do it in such a manner as to represent the twelve tribes, or whole body of the faithful, in such a manner as that this exercise ran abreast with the other services, in such a style as that it suffered no interruption day or night. This work went on through the four hundred years during which the first temple lasted; it was resumed when the second temple was erected, the duties of the performers were as distinctly marked off as

were those of the other officials, their names occupy a place in the list that specifies the functionaries of the House of God. A fact whose type is so large, cannot be trivial. What is the antitype? Probably at the point of time at which we are, there is no one who could return any thing more than a general answer to this question.— It might run thus: the antitype is that set of ideas which arises out of the names of the performers, the relations in which they stood to each other, the time through which their service run, their connection with the other officials, the names and character of the instruments which they used, their standing in reference to the ritual of which they formed a part, and above all the manner in which they dealt with the Psalms that were written for the worship of the temple. The bare mention of these particulars reminds us, that they are unexplored facts. They serve to make us say, what a vast amount of instruction may yet be derived from types that look so large even in the distance; but they bring us no nearer to the subject. They enable a man who is in the habit of reading the Algebra of the Old Testament, to feel the most intimate conviction that there must be rich ores beneath the surface; but even he confesses that there must be more research before an opinion is given as to their exact value. In a general way, one might proceed upon the hypothesis that as music contains within it the two principles of melody and harmony, so it is most likely that it sets forth the two ideas derivable from these. It would be no great stretch of fancy to suppose, that believers are told in this figurative way of the sweetness and concord that should reign within their souls, and that should characterise their intercourse with men around them. Could it be discovered that this general view of the subject was sanctioned by Scripture, one would be able to spiritualise the leading features of

the system; and there would be room for the position, that those men who two thousand years ago discoursed excellent music in the temple, did so that we might learn the value of melody of soul. They sang and played alongside of others, who laid victims on altars, or fed the flame of sacred lamps; surely from this we are entitled to conclude, that the music was in common with these other things, a standing ordinance. The transaction took place *within* the temple; beyond question we have the right to derive the inference that it is only from within the chambers of a believing mind, from within the precincts of a spiritual circle, that the strains of evangelical sweetness can proceed. The concert to all appearance, went on day and night; it made the round of the year; how naturally may one derive from this the doctrine of an unctio that continueth ever, of a stream of water that runs unceasingly, of a career that is ever onward, of a religion in short, which planted by God in the soul, is of the imperishable character of its author. The performers were of two kinds; one praised God with the voice, the other with instruments of music. This distinction would furnish much room for research and speculation; the question would be raised, what does it teach in the general; which was the more honourable employment—might the singer be supposed to represent the stronger character who was useful to the Church by direct agency, the player the man of less marked conformation, who praises God, but in a manner more indirect than the other? Moreover, there were instruments of great diversity of form and sound. Some of these were wind, others were stringed instruments. How much room for investigation does not this chapter furnish! One could imagine indefinite discussion to arise, and perhaps as many thoughts to spring out of this single section, as we have at present in con-

nection with the whole Old Testament. Again, if each of these instruments is mystical, and exhibits a thought, how much light may be thrown upon the physiology of human nature by the solution that would show the meaning of each!—If each shadows forth an idea, that idea stands associated with the kingdom of heaven; what indefinite accessions would not this make to theology, and with such fresh supplies pouring into the reservoir, what an answer would be given to those shallow formalists, who would fain deal with the science as one that was long since brought to perfection! Under these symbols that we seem to think so meaningless; beneath the type of these old harps and trumpets, there may lurk ideas, that if known, would give an aspect entirely new to the philosophy of human nature, would spread out the whole story of its faculties and sentiments, and would place the subject on a basis very different from any on which it has been put since men first made it a topic of discussion.—It does not seem extravagant to suppose, that if music be made use of as a symbol to denote a great feature in the physiology of religion, the various modes and peculiarities of the science each stands associated with some fact in the constitution of the man of God. A temple with singers and players as part of its denizens, tells of melody and agreement in the notes of the new heart, and of the real Church. The minor circumstances of these officials and of their instruments indicate, in accordance with this hypothesis, the variety of the chords and notes that compose the music of each individual nature, the differences between one man and another, and perhaps the various modes of feeling that are the product of different situations and seasons. If this be Algebra, the man who finds out its meaning, must come at great discovery; if these be hieroglyphics, he who is able to decipher them, will remove the veil from deep thoughts.

Further, the *genealogy* and *parentage* of these officials are specified. This field, too, is extensive ; and if all the circumstances that it includes be spiritualised, much doctrine might be added to that of which we are already possessed. Again, many facts in the history of these officials are detailed—as, for instance, the allowance to which they were entitled, or the conduct they pursued on different occasions. These, if the whole be mystical, must as much as the others, be capable of being translated into a moral sense. Again, the Apostle speaks of three separate kinds of sacred poems—*psalms*, *hymns*, and *spiritual songs*. This, without doubt, would supply a classification, guided by which, these compositions might be laid off into compartments, each of which might be indicative of modes of mind, and states of feeling ; and thus a department of scripture which at present suggests no very definite ideas, might be arranged on principles highly scientific, and therefore eminently calculated to yield instruction. To take these psalms as they stand, and merely to sing them with or without the accompaniment of instruments, is in an imperfect and unauthorised manner to attempt to continue the pantomime, which properly terminated when the veil of the temple was rent in twain. It is to endeavour to make ourselves to the men of some coming time, what the men of the old economy ought to be to us. It is to satisfy ourselves with being types and signposts, instead of being students. To suppose that whenever a knot of persons is collected to chaunt those anthems, by this means that scene is realised which Christ has promised to bless and to visit, is to make religion a thing of easy attainment, is to put the promises within the reach of any unregenerate person who can sing. On the other hand, to say, that the psalms and they who sang or played them are symbolic facts, to follow out this thought

into all its results, is to accept the hints which the New Testament seems to furnish, is to continue the mode of interpretation which has already been applied to certain parts of the old economy, and which wherever it has been adopted, has produced good effects, is to take the attitude of enquirers instead of that of unthinking passive beings, is to rescue a large section of scripture from a mode of treatment that leaves it almost in a state of nature. What ever the psalms and the musicians of the temple denote, whether it be concord and sweetness, whether it be emotions of joy and sadness, whether it be the stronger or the gentler sentiments, whether it be the feelings of the individual saint, or the experiences of the church collective, whether it be the physiology of human nature in the general, or that portion of it which concerns the passions chiefly—whatever they pourtray must of course be concealed from believers, until they are willing to study them on the system which has been found efficient to the explaining of allegory in other parts of the sacred volume.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS AS WRITERS AND AS ACTORS.

“Which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven.”—1 PET. I 12.

“Why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you.”—ACTS XIV 15.

Men have been in the habit of thinking that the two propositions, all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and the other, that all the acts of the persons who

were the penmen of the spirit are of a sinless nature, are convertible terms. They do not seem to be aware that there is room for a distinction. David composed the Psalms under the dictation of the spirit; therefore not only are they of plenary authority, but the deeds of that king are to be regarded in the same light. Solomon wrote the Proverbs at the instigation of the Holy Ghost; therefore all the actions of Solomon are canonical, and have the authority of example and precept. Paul and Peter penned certain Epistles, which are of divine authority, because prompted by the spirit; therefore the acts of these men are as little to be questioned as their writings. Such is a principle, which if seldom broadly stated, has been much gone upon. It has enjoyed all the advantage that several dogmas have possessed, which have been put into operation without being avowed. It does not seem to demand much metaphysical subtlety to be able to distinguish in this matter, and to make two of what men have been accustomed to consider one. There is certainly room in philosophy for a distinction, and we think it will not be difficult to show that there is room in fact.—There is no absolute necessity for the supposition, that because a man is infallible as a recorder, he is so as an actor. The reason of the thing does not demand that it should be so; one can suppose the contrary without involving an absurdity. It is quite possible to imagine a volume, every line of which might be the product of divine inspiration, without being compelled to suppose that the men who wrote the communication, were thoroughly imbued with the character of that which they recounted. One might conceive it to be so or not to be so, without interfering with the reason of things. Either supposition appears to be equally reconcilable with likelihood. But this distinction has not been attended to. Because the

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whole Bible is the product of inspiration, therefore it has been inferred that each personage who takes a part in the narrative, must have the entire character of that which he relates. Any mind that is even a little habituated to reasoning must perceive, that there is no necessary connection between the two propositions. As far as the mere reason of the thing is concerned, any one of the three following opinions is quite tenable—that the Bible personages were pure like the inspiration which they tell of, or that they caught *some* portion of its purity, or that they had nothing in common with it. We cannot speak absolutely on the question; we cannot survey it from some high point of abstract fitness, and say that there existed a stern necessity that it should be so, and not otherwise.—It resolves itself after all, into a simple question of fact, and we are invited to enquire, what is the nature of the evidence that may be gathered from the Scriptures in relation to this subject?

Those who act as if the two propositions were inseparably connected, do not seem to be aware, that in many instances they are willing enough to disavow such connection. When the spirit of prophecy descends upon Balaam, and when this unrighteous man delivers a message that forms a link in the chain of communications that announce the Redeemer, they make no scruple to admit, that the conduit did not partake of the nature of that which it conveyed. When Sampson said and did what are allowed to be things prophetic of the deeds of the Lord Jesus, these critics are willing to confess, that the office was assigned to a very faulty personage to speak and to enact the part of one who is infinitely pure. When David heinously wronged and cruelly assassinated a brave and loyal subject, the most wrong-headed on this question are fain to admit, that he did not in this case act at the

instigation of that spirit by which he wrote the Psalms.—When Solomon in his old age loved many strange women, and through their influence worshipped Ashtareth the goddess of the Zidonians, the warmest advocates of this illogical theory abandon it for the time, and admit that he did not do those deeds through the guidance of that inspiration by which he wrote the Proverbs. When Elijah moodily withdrew to a cave, and murmured at the usage which he received from God, it is usual to bear it allowed—some-what faintly, perhaps—that he was not actuated by the sentiments that moved him when he reproved Ahab at the head of his court, or impelled by that power from on high which enabled him to restore to life the child of the Shunamite. When Job cursed his day, these sticklers for saintly infallibility are accustomed to admit, with considerable circumlocution, that he spoke thus, rather at the instigation of the flesh, than of the spirit. When the disciples forsook their master, when Peter trimmed in the question of eating with the Gentiles, when Paul and Barnabas had fierce contention and parted company—in such cases, those who are the pronest to confound inspiration with its vehicle, are compelled to own in that very peculiar manner which denotes a paucity of logic and a redundancy of vapoury sentiment, that the men must be supposed to have been left to themselves for the time. So then, even those who pretend to regard the two propositions as convertible, are forced occasionally to admit, that they may be separated; for they confess that in some cases inspiration was conveyed, through the medium of men who had neither part nor lot in the matter; and in many others that it was communicated by means of those who, from time to time, shewed themselves susceptible of frailties and vices.

Since the reason of the thing does not determine the

case in an absolute manner, the question resolves itself into this, what says the Scripture? It informs us, that in the instances already cited, the wicked Balaam and the rash licentious Sampson contributed their share, to what is now set before the church as matter of instruction. It teaches us, that Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, men who were the lights of their days, teachers of righteousness, and vehicles of inspiration, were guilty of acts, whose turpitude in the case of other men we never think of disputing,—acts of drunkenness, falsehood, fraud, vain-glorying and violence. It acquaints us, that David and Solomon, large contributors to the canon of Scripture, were not only not impeccable in their capacity of agents, but fell into sins that cannot well be exceeded in badness. It tells us, that such men as Elijah and others, who if they did not directly contribute to the composition of scripture, stood forth as advocates of the truth, prophesied of future events, and said and did things that have been preserved in the bible, committed offences for which they were reprov'd and punished. The word of God expressly records of each of the holy personages who occupies any considerable share in its pages, that he spoke or did what does not agree with the standard of perfect truth. In addition to such statements, we have other passages wherein the sacred writers apprise us, that they were not necessarily mixed up with the communications of which they were the reporters. David appears to speak of himself as if his own volition were not concerned in the act; as if he were the passive instrument in the hand of a higher power; as if he performed no greater function than that of being "the pen of a ready writer." We hear Job, in one instance, using language that would lead us to infer that his intelligence had so little share in the things which he had uttered, that he confesses that they were too

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high for him to understand. We see Daniel in earnest colloquy with the Almighty, supplicating to be made acquainted with the meaning of the prophecy that he had just uttered ; we are permitted to know that it pleased God to refuse his request, and to command him to seal up what he had spoken until the time of the end. We hear Peter, when he is descanting on the prophecies of the Old Testament, advancing the remark, that they were given less for the men who uttered them, than for the persons of an after-period—from which we are warranted to conclude, that the connection between revelation and him who conveys it, is not of necessity so intimate as some would have us suppose.

So far as the Old Testament is concerned, these views are admitted in a degree, by many who would not care to express their assent in specific words ; it is in regard to *the New Testament*, that the greatest necessity exists, that the subject should be roundly handled. Men acknowledge, in a faint and ambiguous manner, that Moses or David were not quite infallible in their actions, but they do not seem willing to allow this, in any degree, of Paul or John. They may be reduced to a logical dilemma, in which they will make the admission, rather than seem glaringly ignorant of the rules of reasoning—but as soon as they have made this apparent sacrifice to the Baconian philosophy, they retreat back again to the feelings of the coterie. There is saint-worship, as there is every other form of vice and falsity, in the Protestant churches. There is a prevailing tendency to a sentimental view of things, that would step in between the Apostles and the light of truth, and that would denounce as blasphemy, the attempt to subject their conduct to the rules of investigation, by which the characters of all other mortals are to be tried. And then the man who takes the defensive in this question,

has the advantage of appearances in his favour. While his opponent can be so plausibly designated unbeliever, or innovator at the least, *he* can contrive to seem eminently tender and holy. There is however, rottenness at the core of all such sentimental religion. It does not wear well, it does not behave well; it has nothing but a show of godliness to recommend it. Those who are so very sensitive in regard to the impeccability of the Apostles, would be surprised to be informed, that they are so, to save themselves from the necessity of worshipping God himself. No man will be staggered at being told, that, any one of the creatures is fallible, except the person who has no other god but the creature. Any one who is annoyed beyond measure, at a statement made against a form or any point that is not of primary importance, is a man whose religion consists only of secondary articles.—A man of real piety might not assent to the idea that the worthies of the Bible are to be tested by the criterion by which we estimate ordinary men, when they are not directly engaged in the office of recording the mind of the spirit. He might not have discrimination enough to understand the distinction, or sense enough to relish it. But he would not be upset by it; he would not feel himself to be under the necessity of believing, that the person who held the dogma was a bad man. After all, what are the grounds for the notion, that the writers of the New Testament stand on a different footing from other agents?—The example of the men of the Old Testament will show, that it is possible for inspiration to select particular channels, without communicating to them its own character at all times. It will prove, that men may exercise functions occasionally, which do not altogether supersede their natural tendencies. On what authority do we draw a line between the men of the two economies; on what prin-

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iple do we maintain that what happened in the old should not happen in the new? If the Apostles ever became infallible, it certainly was not during the incarnation of their master. The men who showed themselves so grossly ignorant up to the last, who proved themselves to be capable of such base inclinations, who forsook their Lord in the hour of his need, were not impeccable while acting thus. When Jesus rose from the dead, the men who did not recognise him, and the disciple who did not believe in him till he had received the proof by touch, were not infallible then, whatever they might become afterward.—When they took the method of casting lots to choose a twelfth Apostle, and when by this means they selected a person who appears to have been superseded by the divine election of Paul afterwards, they did not act by plenary inspiration then. But it may be alledged, that these examples occurred *before* the descent of the spirit. Let it be so;—it was *after* that event that we hear them declaring to the people of Lystra, “we also are men of like passions with you;” it was after it that we see the Apostles in solemn conclave, forbidding things strangled and blood; an injunction which the Church by not respecting, shows that it does not consider canonical and of obligation. It was after Pentecost that Peter tampered in the matter of eating with the Gentiles, and that Paul reproved him for his conduct. It was after Pentecost that Paul and Barnabas quarreled on their journey. None of these were the acts of impeccable persons. If they were obviously fallible *before* the day of Pentecost, and if they were so *after* that time, when did their infallibility begin? Did it spring up at one quick start, or did it come into existence by slow degrees? If the Apostles were infallible, they were in possession of an attribute that distinguished them from all other human beings; can it be possible

that there would be no express mention of so distinctive a fact? The mere circumstance that they had the commission to add to the canon and to work miracles, does not of necessity carry infallibility along with it, because it did not do so in the instance of the prophets and writers of the Old Testament. These last were infallible whilst they were conveying spiritual intimations, they were fallible when they were not directly engaged in this function. When the word of the Lord came to them they were the conduits of inspiration; at other times they were simply pious men. On what principle do we make it necessary to the Apostles, that they should occupy a position so different from that held by the worthies of the old economy?

On the whole we do not see how the argument could be more clearly brought out. These men were fallible before the spirit was publicly given, at least if ignorance and positive crimes are proofs of fallibility. They were fallible after Pentecost, if we are to believe their own statement to that effect, and if we are to credit proofs still less equivocal in the shape of acts indicative of ignorance or sinfulness. We suspect that this dogma would not be so tenaciously adhered to, were there not something else in the background. We incline to think, that it is not so much a veneration for the Apostles as an interested clinging to certain practices that have nothing but *their* authority to vindicate them, that keeps the opinion in life. As churchmen would not willingly allow any other but a *literal* version of the decalogue to be orthodox, and that because of their determination to maintain Sabbatical notions, so they would never, except on compulsion, surrender the doctrine of infallibility, because on it hangs baptism by water. Argument would be thrown away upon them, they would stop their ears, they would make up in

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The dogma of infallibility applied to the personages of the Bible, has produced more evil than is commonly supposed. It has done all the more harm that it has not taken a definite shape. It is possible to resist an *article*, or a *canon*, because it is possible to see it; but a *sentiment* is a thing of a shadowy nature that is not so easily withstood. It is like a Parthian horseman, a formidable enemy, because it does not present a fair mark. Existing in this subtle and half acknowledged form, the idea of the impeccability of the Scripture worthies, has prevailed extensively, and has done much harm. It has helped to encourage that powerful inclination which there is in men, to adore any thing or any one but God. Along with a multitude of similar notions, it has supplied them with a religion which is not from heaven. It is one thing to admire a good man, because you descry in him the features of him who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners; it is quite another thing to cherish that semblance of piety, which has no dealings with God himself, but which pleases itself with the notion that there must be something peculiarly godly in predicating faultlessness of each successive worthy, of the old or new economy. It is but a few shades superior to the dogma of heathenism, which gave to the sea, the rivers, and the groves, their own appropriate deities. It is polytheism, with certain modifications, and a Christian aspect. This idea has been productive of evil, inasmuch as it has helped men out in their natural inclination to have a god, without having the one living and true God. There can be little doubt, but that minds of ordinary dimensions, if allowed to worship Moses and Paul, will feel no disposi-

tion to ascend higher, but will satisfy themselves with the idea that they are the subjects of true religion.

Another evil which we consider it to have done is this,—it has led those even whose piety is sincere, to take up with an imperfect standard of morality. If the opinion be entertained, *even in a measure*, that the Saints and Apostles are faultless, a large amount of defective conduct is at once stamped with a higher figure than belongs to it. Actions are marked letter A I, which have some flaw about them, or which are positively bad. A worthy of the Old or New Testament, is guilty of violence, or duplicity, or covetousness, or self-seeking; but according to hypothesis, that man's doings are above being canvassed, therefore these sins are to be admitted to form a part of the established rule of the Church. We entertain no doubt that the standard has been materially lowered by this circumstance. How can it be otherwise? To fix the statute that the bible saints are not to be criticised, is equivalent to admitting crimes into the roll of virtues.—We cannot think as we ought of cowardice and cruelty, so long as we are in the habit of admiring the conduct of David when he enjoins Solomon to show no mercy to old Joab. We cannot see time-serving in its proper colours, or maintain a high bearing in our transactions with them that are without, so long as we persuade ourselves that Paul, when he circumcised Timothy because of the Jews, did a noble or a christian act. Little doubt can be entertained, that the current morality of the churches has been materially debased by this peculiarity. If the visible church so generally exhibits an arena, where there is much of ceremony, and much of doctrine, but a mode of practice not discernibly superior to that of the circles where religion is repudiated, some part of the phenomenon is owing to the weak prejudice which forbids us to can-

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was the conduct of the scripture worthies. It is obvious that so long as the dogma prevails, the offence cannot be exposed, because the offender has a lurking place to which he can repair, and from which he cannot be driven.

There is yet another mischief that this opinion produces. It renders scripture disreputable, it puts weapons in the hand of the sceptic. Men of this class with a clear and ratiocinative mind, are able from one part of scripture, to construct principles which condemn these actions found in other parts—actions which the church vindicates and perhaps praises. From the life of Jesus, or from the preceptive portions of scripture, they form a standard which exposes the defectiveness of these other deeds—and thus they consider themselves entitled to lay down the position, that revelation contradicts itself. It would be otherwise, if the friends of religion acted in a more reasonable manner. If they accurately marked off the doctrine, that there is but one perfect being in the Bible, that his ethics are in every instance catholic and preceptive, that any part of the conduct of his saints which does not agree with the standard that he set up, is to be rejected; if in a systematic style they drafted out the canon, that a saint *recording* is a different person from a saint in a state of *action*, infidelity would be deprived of one of its arguments.

The alteration which we suggest appears to us important. It would fully vindicate the principle, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God; but it would bring in the distinction, hitherto little perceived, that the inspiration is designed to answer different purposes. It would show how the entire volume is canonical, without running into the sophism of making it all to be so in the way of *example*. It would exhibit how every word is exactly as the Most High wished it to be, without being guilty of

the fallacy of saying, that *therefore* every word is an injunction to us to go and do so likewise. It would introduce the practice of distinguishing between those portions which are given by the spirit in order that we may *imitate* them, and those others which are equally given by the spirit in order that we may *avoid* them. It would open our minds to the fact, that it is worthy of the Almighty to insert in his communication to men, certain acts because they are evil, and because he wished his people to eschew them. It would show that a warning may be as suitable a thing for God to give his creatures, as an example. The present clumsy method of laying down a rule, that certain persons are holy, and that therefore all their doings are related in order that the Church may imitate them, is far from being favourable either to reason or to morals. It accustoms men to gulp a fallacy; and such food is the reverse of nutritive. It habituates the eye to a distorted manner of looking at things. Let the principle be adopted that "there is none good but one, that is God;" let the acts of God as seen in Jesus Christ, or let the sayings of men when in a state of plenary inspiration; let these be received as the sole criterion of morals, the results would be great and salutary. Scepticism would no longer be able to aver, that religionists vindicated and imitated actions obviously bad. The cause of freedom would gain great accessions, and believers would have a better understanding of the scripture which enjoins them to "prove all things," and to "hold fast that which is good." An extensive domain would be opened to enquiry that is now religiously shut up; a great quantity of base coin would be withdrawn from circulation, saint-worship would receive a deadly wound, the character of God would be more directly obtruded on men's notice, and less countenance would be given to the pernicious error, which in-

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CHAPTER IX.

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM.

"He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved."

MARK XVI. 16.

Whether there should be much or little water, whether children or grown persons should come in for the privilege of sacred hydraulics; questions of this quality seem anything but important or even sane to the eye of mere reason. The writer has this subject to thank in some measure if he has been able to attain to any opinions of a sounder nature than those which are currently held. The two principal causes that led him to suspect the presence of spurious elements in the system of theology, were, *first*, that most men were not afraid to profess without having real faith; *secondly*, that all the interest of the Christian commonwealth appeared to turn upon such subjects, as sprinkling and immersion. To call Socrates a blinded heathen, and to find christianity in discussing topics that *he* would have turned from with contempt; to speak with melancholy compassion of the trifling controversies of the schoolmen, and then to pretend that wisdom was to be seen in unending disquisitions upon the comparative advantages of the thorough dip or partial sprinkle systems; this did not seem rational. Essays on the broad and narrow guage, must to any unprejudiced mind, look venerable and salutary compared with this. Having looked at the subject for a considerable time from this point of view,

having perceived that the feelings of theologians and their acolytes revolved upon such pivots, having noticed in numerous instances, that science, literature, sound doctrine and morality, were all dealt with as things trivial in comparison with these others, having observed that conformity in such wretched externals, was the test on which sects were formed, religion estimated, and reputation obtained, having seen that in proportion as men were imbecile in understanding and worthless in character they evinced a corresponding concern in such matters, the writer was induced to doubt whether in any sense they were of divine origin.

When such objections as these stated above, are brought up as reasons why these ceremonies are not from God, the usual answer given is, *that they have been much abused*. The view of these facts led the writer to more sweeping conclusions, and at last conducted him to the conviction, not merely that they are liable to bad results, *but that such are in their very essence*. It is not a sufficient argument against a practice, that it appears hostile to reason, provided Scripture gives a plain deliverance in its favour.—But if there be much doubt as to this latter point, if there be no distinct cause for believing that Scripture is express in commanding, then the fact that it appears obviously unreasonable, comes in as a strong argument against it. So long as we thought that Scripture was distinct in enjoining this rite, it appeared to us an inadequate objection that it helped to manufacture false priests and formal adherents, or that it furnished a perpetual occasion for angry recrimination and interminable discussion. But when the opinion flashed upon our mind, that the scriptural argument was not what it is represented to be, when it matured into the belief that the Bible did not command the rite, then in losing this, it seemed to us to lose every con-

receivable recommendation, and all those subsidiary thoughts which we had derived from observation, rushed in and made assurance doubly sure. Many pages might easily be filled with the history—it would be unfit to call it the literature—of this subject. Those who are governed by what has been thought and done, may esteem it very important to be put in possession of the different views that have prevailed in the past ; those again who consider that the question lies entirely within the pages of the Bible, will regard such notices as quite irrelevant and idle. The story may be briefly related, as thus : that about the period of Constantine, when the church received a regular constitution, the ceremony of sprinkling children or catechumens with water appears to have been one of the fixed usages ; that by degrees it seems to have been invested with additional pomp and consequence ; that it was the test which the rulers of the lower empire imposed upon the heathen tribes when they sought to proselytise them ; that along the six or seven centuries which are named the dark ages, the acceptance of this symbol from an orthodox channel, was generally esteemed equivalent with becoming a christian ; that no higher ideas seem to have existed at the time when the reformation sprung up ; that the subject has occupied an immense amount of attention ever since that event ; and that a marvellous degree of interest has been displayed by sects, in discussing the profound alternative, how the lotion is to be applied. Such a narrative is surely far better given in a sentence, than in a volume. Who is there whose time is so worthless, as that it would be well devoted to such a task ? Who is there toward whom we feel so harshly, as that we would impose upon him the penalty of reading the volume ? In those centuries of easy acquiescence that preceded the reformation, much curiosity does not seem to have existed about

the mode. Probably it was various. Possibly the taste and fancy of the dispenser, and the catechumen, were consulted. During the period that has succeeded that epoch, men have thought themselves well employed in canvassing this question. Few that have professed to belong to the visible church, but have evinced some interest on the subject of much or little water. Thousands of volumes have emanated from the topic, and feelings as warm as those that agitated the schoolmen in reference to realism and nominalism, have been excited by it, and have been diffused through large sections of the church. The feeling mind takes the retrospect of such scenes with sentiments of much dreariness, it experiences unmitigated pain when it thinks how many must have been turned aside from the straight path, by such serious follies, it grieves to reflect how many an intellectual man may have thought himself warranted to ridicule religion, when he saw its apparent friends so engrossed by such poor quilllets, it breathes an eager wish that it may please the Almighty in the time to come, to permit, that a portion at least of the Church may escape from such anile pedantries.

The controversies that have taken place on this subject during the last three hundred years, if they have been numerous, if they have been frivolous, if they have been acrimonious, if they have led many a man of mind to think contemptuously of the sanity of the professors of religion, have probably conducted to one good result; they have shewn that much may be said on both sides, and that the dispute might be carried on ad infinitum, without leading to anything very definite. Those who have attended to the turns of the battle must have been struck by the equality between the combatants. Those who have looked carefully on, must have formed the notion, that the strife might last for ages if conducted on the same terms

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as before. This circumstance has probably induced many to suppose, that there must be some error in a quarter where the possibility of discussion seems to be quite illimitable—and without doubt it has led others to wish that it were so, and to hope that there may be some fair way to get rid of a dilemma so very petty, and so deplorably tiresome. It is now two centuries since the idea occurred to one or two, that both parties were in error; that those who inclined to sprinkling, and it applied to children, were wrong in common with those who advocated immersion, and it confined to adults. They exhibited their views in a clear and frank manner: but from that time to this, they have not had many acolytes. It was in the days of the commonwealth that they gave forth this opinion; it was during a period peculiar for bold and independent thinkers, that this fresh and pure doctrine was chiefly maintained. The Quakers adopted the thought, but they did it harm. They held it along with sterile Arminian opinions, with weak and extravagant sentiments on the subject of the spirit—and these bad elements helped to choke the good seed. Had it been supported by sound Calvinists, as it seems first to have been mooted by them, its position at this moment would have been very different from what it is. It has been stifled, and almost slain, by the associates with which it was forced to herd. The times that succeeded the commonwealth, were not favourable to the growth of that which had nothing to recommend it but its spirituality. What they wanted was religion, that would look like troops under review. Give them the pomp and circumstance of a well drilled exterior, and they did not ask questions about the soul. Now, this opinion was not calculated to look well on parade;—it had a less dashing aspect, than the old dogma of the priest and the font; can we wonder then that they sent it

admitt? If it had not an imposing aspect, of what use was it at a time when an *established* church was the point at issue? We can imagine them to have said, we have no positive objection to spirituality as such, provided it looks well in uniform; if it is ample in its proportions, if it can keep the step, if it understands the salute, it shall not be molested. In those times, Episcopacy wished to be united in splendid espousals with the state; the Presbyterian and the Independent, though they spoke of plainness, wished a little elegance along with it; Sacraments were felt by all parties to be an imposing show that had no small influence upon the vulgar mind; and so the Church in this article preferred the specious to the real. During the irregular state in which society was in the time of the commonwealth, there was no premium on uniformity, such as there was before, and has been since. Hence men were not afraid to acknowledge opinions, which whilst they were spiritual, could not claim the sanction of a popular creed. Since that time, the premium upon conformity has been enormous, Episcopacy and Presbytery carrying their canons to the Patent office of the Government, have been licensed to do business under a royal signet, and the strongest minds of each generation considering it to be their wisest course to repress any inclination to be wise above what was patented, have bestowed their vigour in keeping things as they found them. In spite of the learned and clever men who have given their sanction to the idea that Scripture commands a ceremony or sacrament wherein water is used, we venture to give our vote to the opinion advocated by Dell and others, which is to this effect, that water being a type of the spirit, was properly employed till he was manifested, that the use of the type ceased when the antitype came in, and that there is nothing in the New Testament that warrants the idea, that it should

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have been continued afterward. It shall be the object of the remainder of this article, to advance the reasons on which we found this opinion, as well as to shew what are the advantages that we conceive to proceed from holding it.

First,—Accepting the meaning of the term *baptizo* from the hands of those who advocate a ceremony, we get the thought to *dye* or *tinge*. This surely has been fairly come at. In taking the sense from our opponents, we cannot be suspected of seeking an undue advantage. Now this is the meaning which their learned doctors propound.—This is the signification which Dr. Carson after pages of disquisition, brings forward as the result of wide and varied researches. But of what use can this meaning be to the friends of the ceremony? If it be the true and usual sense of the word, how does it aid the views of the partisans of water? Whatever may be said of that wholesome element, it cannot be pretended that it communicates a new tinge either to the body or the soul. But the true signification of the term requires that it should be associated with such effects. An element of which one of the usual definitions is that it is colourless, cannot with any propriety be regarded as that which is to impart a colour; a fluid which is so well known as possessing no power to dye other bodies, cannot with any regard to sense be looked upon as exerting that influence. Still after a large expanse of literature has been explored, after an immense number of passages from writers of different periods and styles have been compared, this is ascertained to be the average or most ordinary meaning of the verb. The conclusion appears to be very natural, that it can have no necessary connection with water. The word means to dye, but water has no such quality; therefore when it is used the idea of water is not necessarily brought up. But if

when this word is employed in Scripture, the intention is merely to denote a ceremony into which water enters, and by which notoriously no effect either physical or mental supervenes, with what propriety is the term introduced? By the largest induction of proofs its accustomed meaning is to dye; but according to this supposition the word of God employs it where no dyeing takes place. Let us try another hypothesis. Let us suppose that a ceremony is intended only in those cases in which water is added to the word baptise; let us imagine that when it occurs alone a ceremony is not meant, but that the real meaning of the word is then employed; let us conceive that in such instances something real and doctrinal is designed, and then we procure a thought which answers to the etymology of the word, and which agrees with things as we see them.

Although water produces no visible change either upon body or soul, it is not so with the Holy Spirit. He regenerates. He communicates a new character, he imparts a new colour. The effect which he produces on the mind, is at the least as palpable as that which happens to a substance when it is dyed. There is no misapplication of terms in expressing this effect by the word baptizo. In this view of the case, in such instances as that where Christ commands his followers to go and teach all nations, baptising them into his name; and in other similar cases where the verb occurs in an absolute manner, and without the addition of the term water, we are invited to think of regeneration, or the baptism of the spirit. And whilst this notion coincides with the admitted meaning of the word, it is not without countenance from passages of Scripture that speak of sanctification with a reference to the process of tinging. Thus, "come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be

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red like crimson, they shall be as wool." The argument then, expressed in few words, is to this effect : to baptise means to dye, but in the use of water there is no dyeing, therefore it is unlikely that it is contemplated. On the other hand, where the holy spirit operates, a change takes place, the nature receives a new colour ; therefore it is likely that this is what is meant by baptism, except where it is made plain by other circumstances, that a rite is that which is referred to.

Second,—The ceremony does not seem to be congenial to the character of the Christian economy. *It* finds its peculiarity in the fact that it is the dispensation of the spirit. *It* seems to be the realisation of the promise which says, that the time cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship God in the spirit and in truth. *It* looks to have begun with the abolition of symbols. When Jesus expiring said, " it is finished," it is usually considered, that a part of his meaning at least, was, that the period of types was brought to an end. When on the same occasion the veil of the temple was rent in twain, it is commonly believed, that in this event was contained an emblematic intimation, that the age of shadows had passed away. Ideas of this kind occupy a considerable portion of the Apostolic Epistles. These speak of ceremonies as things that belonged to the *minority* of the Church ; as events that were *school-masters* until Christ came ; as matters that found their fulfilment in his death and the manifestation of the spirit ; as circumstances which he " took out of the way, nailing them to his cross."—Surely no one will deny that this is a frequent thought, and that it engrosses a large part of these Epistles. But what regard is had to it if ordinances and rites are still in force ?

There seems to be no reality whatever in the statement,

which attempts to make out that baptism by water and the Lord's Supper are not *symbols*. We can imagine nothing more piratical in the way of argument, than such an endeavour. In what do they differ from symbols; are they facts in themselves; have they essential virtue contained within them? But if they are, what everything about them seems to proclaim them to be, ceremonies: what right have they to stand when everything else of their texture is superseded, and converted into a doctrine? They are either facts or symbols; they either contain inherent goodness, or they are good because of that which they represent. To those who maintain them to be facts we say that the process of reasoning by which they make out this, would lay them under the obligation to observe every ceremony that had existence before the holy spirit was revealed. To those who allow them to be symbols we put the question—what is there in the character of these two rites that secures them a continuance, when all of their kind have been annulled? Those who declare them to be facts, expose themselves to the imputation of placing religion in that which requires no change of heart which does not even exact common intelligence or ordinary morality from those who adopt it. Those who acknowledge them to be symbols and yet contend for their continuance, place themselves in the situation of maintaining that certain rites should retain their place in an economy which seems to introduce that which is subversive of all rites. Those who hold that baptism by water has virtue in itself—and up to this moment these forms of the great majority in the visible Church, reduce themselves to the necessity of maintaining that it saves—thereby establish a position which is virtually subversive of the righteousness of God, which rivets the empire of carnal priesthood, and which brings back the reign of

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whole ceremonial law. Those who represent it as a symbol, but as one which is of obligation upon the churches, appear to take a stand equally untenable; for how are they to prove a real distinction between that which they retain and the other shadows which they admit are abrogated? They are forced either to do this, or at all events to shew in the clearest manner, that there are unmistakable injunctions to retain this particular symbol. The rule by their own confession, is against them; they are obliged to make out a very plain case of an *exception* before they can be listened to. Those are in a dismal situation, who are shut up to the belief, that the ceremony has life and virtue in itself. They are in the melancholy predicament of covering with a covering which is not of God's spirit, whereby they add sin to sin. They set aside the work of redemption, and get nothing in its place.— They blot out the spirit from the map of things, and get a priest in his stead. They annul the pure doctrine of sanctification by God, and in its room they obtain bondage, immorality, and a little water. Those again who say that it is but a symbol, place themselves in a situation which if not as pernicious, is quite as illogical; for whilst they allow it to be no more than this, they also hold the opinion, that the economy of the New Testament is expressive of symbols. In order to cause the two ideas to seem to agree, they are forced to try to make out that there is something peculiar in the texture of this ceremony, so that they end by proving it to be a symbol and not a symbol. It is while they are occupied with such small dialectics that the weakness of their argument comes out to view. They admit it to be a ceremony, why then do they not suffer it to share the fate of other ceremonies? As they are unwilling that this should happen, and in order to obviate it, they retract what they have already

granted, by trying to prove that it is not a mere ceremony after all. Is immersion in water, or sprinkling with water, more than a thing external or corporeal? Has it any connexion with mind, has it any influence to metamorphose or to affect human nature? If it has not, if it is a purely formal act, must not its partisans confess it to be simply a rite; and if they admit it to be no more, are they not bound to assign the strongest reasons why it is to subsist when all other things of a similar kind are to pass away? Those who maintain that it is a fact, hold an opinion that is absurd, and that is as pernicious as it is foolish. The slightest use of the eyes suffices to show that it is not a reality; nay, the men who declare it to be so, are the clearest evidences that it is a shadow. They assert that it saves; but every thing about themselves shews that *they are not saved*. In the whole history of the church there is not a case of a shining believer who has espoused this idea. Its abettors have been cunning Pharisees, and eager place hunters. Those who declare it to be a ceremony, and yet maintain that it should continue, all the while that they believe that ceremonies do not belong to the present economy, are they not bound to show that there is something of a very exceptional nature in this instance? If they do not establish this, are they not in the predicament of holding at one time two contradictory ideas?

Third,—Some, while they cling to baptism by water, regard it as a *type*; others look upon it as an *antitype*. Let us survey it in either aspect. Those who hold it to be the first, consider it a type of the spirit. But then arises the question, why have a symbol of a personage who is present; why have type and antitype together?—Omitting the argument that would maintain that the age of shadows has elapsed, there still remains the position that the need of a type has passed away, when that which

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it represents has come. The finger-board that points to a town, is properly situated at the distance of a mile or two from the terminus, but would be quite unsuitable if it stood in the market place of the town. When they allow it to be a type, or what is the same thing, an emblem of the spirit, what analogy of scripture can they plead as a reason for representing by a sign a personage who has been publicly manifested, and who is present in the church? As well might they insist on using a telescope to survey an object that was within the reach of their hand. Those who call it an antitype, have in our estimation no better argument. It is with reference to *circumcision* that they assign it this title. They regard the two as co-relatives. Their position is, that the place which was occupied by circumcision in the old dispensation, is held by the ceremony of baptism in the new. But who ever heard of type and antitype being *of the same substance*? According to this notion, a carnal or formal rite in one economy, is responded to by a carnal rite in the other. But this is not the principle that we derive from the ordinary and recognised method of interpreting the scriptures. From it we would learn, that the system of the bible is to have that which is natural in the one economy, and that which is spiritual in the other. But this established axiom is transgressed in the present instance; for the thing which is called the antitype, is as completely ritual, external, as that other which is called the type. Those who give to baptism the first of these two designations, seem to be under the delusion of supposing, that they can point out the spirit more clearly by a symbol, than he can designate himself by his actual presence. The consequence is, that few there are holding this view who ever get any thing more than the shadow or beggarly element. To our mind they behave about as wisely as those would do, who not

contented with the light which the sun yields at noon, should think to improve the matter by adding a rushlight. Those who prefer the second notion, and term the thing an antitype, appear to us to have either a very weak reason, or a very towering fancy. An ewer or a vat filled with that element whose properties are known to all, is by them invested with sacredness. What gives it this character? Is it the man who presides? How can he impart to water, that quality which he so generally does not possess himself? Is it the effect produced that hallows its cause? The slightest use of the eyes will inform the most cursory observer, that no effect of any sort does supervene, unless it be superstition and a love of rites.

Fourth,—Baptism by water is a ceremony; but why are not its outlines marked out as in the case of other facts of the same kind? There is a multitude of rites in the Old Testament, but we believe in every instance that the *person*, the *time*, the *place*, and the *mode*, are rigorously defined. Whatever be the rite in question, it is stipulated who is to perform it, who is to be the subject, at what time, in what place, and with what attendant circumstances, it is to be observed. It cannot be pretended that this occurs in the case before us. As to the person who is to celebrate it, it is idle to pretend that there is a rule laid down when we see it performed in one instance by an apostle, in another by a deacon, in others by those who held no office in the church. It is vain to seek to make out a principle in this instance. As to the time when it is to be practised, the interminable discussions that have now lasted for centuries, between the paedobaptists and their opponents, serve to show how little of a rule can have been laid down in this particular. As to the mode, the same argument may be employed, that it, if defined, could not have been determined with any preci-

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sion. But is that a rite, all the conditions of which are left to the taste and fancy of each man who chooses to observe it? Is it not the very character of an ordinance that it is prescribed in the most punctilious manner?—Does it not owe all its value to the circumstance that its outlines are defined with the utmost care? Is it not the very genius of an ordinance, that in its whole length and breadth it is a thing ordained? Do we ever find during the economy of the Old Testament, that men fell into endless discussions about the time, place, and manner of any one of the rites? Is it to be supposed that the same spirit who laid off the ordinances in such a manner in the one dispensation as to prevent mistakes, would leave them thus vague and indefinite in the other? Is that a ceremony of divine appointment, whose shape requires to be made up from so many scattered fragments procured by such indirect and fanciful methods? When we consider the tenour of the train of reasoning by which the churches get hold of the ceremony of baptism by water, and then fix who are to practise it, and then prescribe when it is to be celebrated, and then appoint the conditions under which it is to be observed, it appears to us that we are not looking at men taking a rite as they find it from the flat open surface of the New Testament, but rather at those who are seeking to rear up a consistent structure out of their own freaks and fancies. When we survey the aspects of any ceremony appertaining to the Old Testament, we look upon that which in every limb and feature stands out fully disclosed. We have not to guess but to copy. When we inspect the amount of scripture from which the Church pretends to derive its warrant for this ordinance, we behold nothing more than a few occasions in which it was practised, and these *dissimilar in their character*, and in place of an argument

which is taken directly off from the face of Scripture, we have circuitous reasonings, helped out by hypotheses and references to the traditions of the Church.

Fifth,—The Church is not contented with using water, it augments the mischief by calling the thing a *Sacrament*. The idea that a reasonable man would receive from a right study of the features of the Christian system is to the effect, that it is designed to render those on whom it operates mentally or morally better. Such a person would likewise be led to the opinion, that it does this by the infusion of a new character, in virtue of the divine nature which enters in. But if one advanced to this point, we do not see how he could avoid proceeding on to the next principle, viz—that if the gospel acts intellectually, it must do so by addressing itself to mind. Now that which affects mind in the way of improving and changing it, must be *thought*. It will follow then from this principle, that whatever is directly calculated to influence the mind so as to augment its morality, or what is the same thing, to weaken its tendencies to evil, must be spiritual and christian. Whatever on the contrary, has no direct or necessary leading this way, must be regarded as unworthy of the divine artificer. According to this view, whenever the mind is under the power of a thought which speaks of human depravity or divine holiness in any one of their numerous bearings, it is under an influence which comes down from heaven. Taking this view, a man may be considered to be within the sphere of such influences when he is reading the Scriptures, when he is working out their doctrines in the line of active duty, when he is conversing with pious persons, or when he is under the impression of providences that have the effect of inducing religious ideas; for in each of these situations his mind is addressed by thoughts that are of heavenly birth. The

spirit obviously works through the Bible, through the words and actions of good men, and through events suggestive of pious reflection. In each of these instances thought is evoked. When the Scriptures are read, new ideas are imbibed, or old impressions are strengthened.—When a man is engaged in doing the will, he is learning the doctrine by dint of the novel circumstances in which he is placed, and the new views that are obtruded on his notice. When he holds intercourse with the godly, he derives the moral benefit that a man may be expected to receive when he converses with those whose minds are stronger, or whose views are more matured, or at all events with those who can aid him because of the diversity of structure that there is in different intellects. When outward events alter his situation and affect his feelings, they too may produce a spiritual result, not so much by introducing new ideas, as by driving home thoughts that before lay only on the surface of the mind. We can understand how in any one of these circumstances a man may be led onward in the walk of faith. But how he can be improved by that which is not mental, by that which contains no thought in it, is what we cannot see. Now this is the case with the *ceremonial* part of what is called the Sacraments. There is a thought expressed by the emblem of water, or of bread and wine ; but in order to get it, it is not necessary that the ceremony should be practised. There was a good reason why these things should be observed until Christ and the spirit were manifested, but it appears to have expired since these events occurred. That these types should remain in the Scriptures, and that men should learn from them the doctrines which they contain, is agreeable to sound reason. In serving this end, they seem to have accomplished their object. No further use can be extracted from them by ex-

hibiting them in a dramatic manner. They contain a thought, but to procure it no pantomime is necessary. To say water implies sanctification, the distribution of bread and wine means feed my sheep, feed my lambs, is to get the idea—anything more is bodily exercise and will-worship, damning to some, pernicious to all. We do not contend that these emblems denote no idea—we maintain the opposite ; what we strive to express is, that the idea can be had without the drama. In order to obtain the thoughts couched beneath the figures of the Old Testament, it is not requisite that the events should be repeated. It is not necessary to have the temple and its services back again, before one can draw forth the philosophy comprised in them. On the contrary it has always been found, that to recapitulate the act was to banish the thought. What we maintain is, that the two rites, named the Sacraments, are in this category. We are anxious to lose them as rites, in order to have them as doctrines. We desire that men should desist from acting the symbol, in order that they may have the better chance of feeling the idea. The professor of religion is rendered better in the direct ratio that his mind is advanced ; but all that is mental in these types is come at by reading and inwardly digesting their sense. To act them, is to lose sight of the thought in the ceremony. If even in the case of adults to administer water is to produce no thought, what is to be said of the matter when infants are the subjects ? If it is not mental in the first case, how much less can it be so in the other ? If it be a fair objection against the rite in the case of a grown person, that it puts no new element into the mind, the transaction seems still more absurd when the subject of it is a creature in which the first rudiments of thought are scarcely developed. Here is an act without an effect, and the Almighty quoted as its warrant ; here is a fact

affirmed to be religious, done upon that which is not susceptible of a religious impression ; here is an act that is declared to be spiritual, performed upon that which cannot think ! It leads to the putting of the question, are God's laws reversed in this particular, and does holiness reach the child through the body ? We further dislike the word sacrament, and the ideas associated with it, because there is in it an appeal to the mysterious, and that we believe without necessity. There *are* mysteries in the bible ; but it seems of paramount importance that men should not make any which are *not* there. Where God declares a fact to be a mystery, we can conceive admirable results to spring out of the doctrine. For a man to give out that a subject is mysterious, when it is not, is to supply superstition with a new channel by which to diverge from the truth, and is to furnish scepticism with a new means of causing the gospel to appear absurd. So long as there are thick woods, it is difficult to extirpate wild beasts. So long as there are close lanes and blind alleys, thieves will enjoy some degree of security ; and so long as there are rites appealing to wonder and other animal emotions, it will be quite impossible to represent the claims of intellect and morality in such a manner as to command the attention of religionists. The mysteries of the heathen mythology did harm, because they were not real.—They were rites through which, it is possible, the intelligent saw, and which they used as means to excite the passions of the vulgar. Thought and morality did not spring from them. The fruits which they produced were of a different kind. Fornication, drunkenness, fraud, violence, and other vices were their natural results. When the feelings were aroused by a lust for the marvellous, it was more likely that one beastly inclination should lead on to cognate passions, than that the mind should turn in the direc-

tion of piety and good works. A mystery of real heavenly origin, does good, *because it happens at the right place.* A mystery reared up by human ignorance or duplicity, is of evil influence, because it occurs at the wrong place.—The effect of a mystery that is of divine origin is, to foster humility and lowly adoration of the wisdom of the Most High. The effect of a mystery which men have erected is, to extend the empire of superstition and vice, to augment the number of deceivers and dupes, and to make something pass for religion which is neither intelligent nor moral. Baptism by water, and the other sacrament so called, certainly appeal strongly to the love of the marvellous, and are very susceptible of fancy work and decorative theology. We do not believe that any thing more honourable can be said of them. We would be willing to allow to those who think that it is a necessary part of the science of government to cheat the rabble, to those who approve of the *fee fa fum* style of management, that these rites might be conducive toward their object. Those who consider that mankind can only be really improved by the progress of truth and reason, will not deem this any recommendation of the Sacraments. We are of opinion then, that these rites address themselves to animal sentiments, that in so doing they appeal to natural and not to spiritual feelings, that they immensely favour the tendency to profess without believing, that they greatly obstruct the entrance of intelligence and moderate honesty into the visible Church, and that it is not practicable to press these powerfully on public notice, so long as such convenient safety-valves continue to be sanctioned.

Again, we object to the idea of a Sacrament, because it carries with it thoughts that are virtually subversive of free grace. Its patrons would be far from admitting this, but they are not safe judges in the matter. The state of

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the visible Church will tell the truth much more faithfully. Of it there is probably a fifth part, that makes a distinct profession in the way of taking a place at what is called the Lord's Supper, or by some other overt method. What proportion of this number consists of converted men? Is there one in fifty? Our experience would say that there was not more. Now what leads to this portentous anomaly that fifty men should intimate themselves to be Christians, and that out of these not more than one should know what he was doing? Our reply is, that the things said and thought about Sacraments account for the largest part of the difficulty. There cannot be the smallest possible doubt, that the general impression respecting these ordinances is, *that they save*. All Popery thinks so.—Episcopacy, throughout the greater part of its domain, believes so. The other sections are very sedulous in repudiating the supposition—but actions speak louder than words—and their members, by the fact that they too profess and that the too are not converted, declare that the opinion, though rejected in words, is held in reality.—There are a few pious teachers who see a part of the evil, without suspecting its cause. They make a point of warning men not to rely upon ordinances which, according to them, are divine institutions, but which have not a saving power. These do not see, that they build with one hand, what they attempt to pull down with the other. They are not aware that men will never cease to cling to ceremonies, until their divine authority is definitively denied.—Until then, they might as well advise drowning persons not to catch at straws, as tell poor shallow hypocrites not to hang by rites. Nay, more, these good men are not consistent. They allow that ordinances are from heaven, and yet they declare that they do not save. Now, either their ceremony of water saves, or it has no being or validity—

for Scripture says that baptism saves, and Scripture also distinctly depones, that there is but *one* baptism. So then, the aspect which the visible Church exhibits, is an all-pervading reliance on the efficacy of Sacraments, which assertion is justified and proved by the fact, that the Church, consisting mainly of persons who have not been born again, is by this token composed of those who have mistaken something else for true and undefiled religion.—That something else we believe to be very generally Sacramental illusion. The only exception to this widespread tendency, occurs in the persons of a few teachers, and a small fraction of their hearers—and these are very pertinacious in asserting, that faith and not ceremonies carries salvation with it. These men have no influence to stem the torrent, because they uphold the authority of that which they deny to be saving, and the one statement neutralises the other. We consider then, that it is with great reason that we alledge against Sacraments, that they are thorough foes to the righteousness of Christ. They have always been so. There are the best reasons why they should be so. By the warrant of the Bible, salvation is associated with the doctrines which they set forth. But if the symbol is used, there is no possibility of hindering men from attaching to it the idea which is connected with the doctrine; to retain it, is to employ an effectual method to render men worshippers of the letter which kills.

Furthermore, we object to the idea of a Sacrament, because it pertains to the local, the conventional, the enjoined. It does not at all appear to coincide with the genius of the economy, which worships God in the spirit and in truth. It stipulates for a time, a place, a mode.—It appears to be much more in accordance with the character of the first Covenant, concerning which we are told.

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that it had ordinances of divine service, and holy furni-
ture. The nature of the gospel, as we would gather it
from the surface of the New Testament, is free from sym-
bols, types, and rites, is opposed to ordinances, consists in
actual communication with the divine personage to whom
these things pointed. A sacrament contravenes these
principles. It finds a time, place, and method—or rather,
it *makes* them. It compels religion to be dependent upon
these accidents. It prevents any one from having a ca-
tholic or philosophical feeling on the subject. It reduces
men to believe that there is a patent method of being more
religious in one time and place than in another. It is of
a piece with Judaism, it is not in agreement with Chris-
tianity. It is like the Jew when *he must needs* go up to
Jerusalem at the feast time. And if we adopt the strin-
gent views of Sacraments that are held by high Church-
men, if we embrace their opinion—which connects sal-
vation with them, and which after all is the consistent idea
—then in what mischievous and foolish conclusions are
we not landed? According to this, baptism by water, and
communion by bread and wine, save, and either they do
so, or they are of no obligation; and then salvation is
made dependent upon something different from faith, it is
forced to rest upon things that a man might not be able
to procure, it renders a person more or less a Christian
according as he is in the neighbourhood of streams of
water, and in proportion as he is within an easy distance
of bakers, vintners, large towns and holy edifices. And
let it not be alledged that we may have Sacraments with-
out connecting them with salvation. This is a frequent,
but it is a very weak plea. Scripture is express on the
subject. It says that baptism *saves*, and that it is *one*.—
Now either the ceremony of water is that one baptism
which saves, or we have nothing to do with it. Scripture

says, Except ye eat the flesh of the son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Now either this is done in partaking of bread and wine, or that practice, insofar as it is a rite, is a nullity. To take these two institutes as types, and to read off their meaning, is to do that which is in harmony with the gospel, is to follow a method which may prove eminently conducive to holiness, is to embrace a view which a man may cherish and act upon under any conceivable circumstances; for there is no situation that can prevent one from indulging in holy thoughts, or the practice to which they lead. To regard them as ceremonies to be observed, is, if we are consistent, to associate salvation with mere bodily exercise, and to rear up a religion that stipulates for various conditions of climate, situation, or position in life, in order to a compliance with its rules.

Yet again: a Sacrament is to our mind a thing most unlikely to be divine, because it gives existence to a class that Scripture denounces in strong terms. Formal and unregenerate "masters of assemblies" owe their being in a great degree to these rites. They are a something to skulk behind. Hence we have not the slightest doubt that at this moment the leaders of the people throughout Christendom, with few exceptions, are men who are the offspring of ceremonies rather than children of God. As things are, it is not possible to hinder this, and it is scarcely practicable to make any considerable number of persons *understand what you mean*. The object of the bible is to rear up a race of teachers and hearers who shall be realities and not fictions, antitypes of Israel, a royal priesthood, a peculiar people zealous of good works. The endeavour of men seems to be to contravene this design, and to raise up a generation that shall hinder the existence of the other. They are greatly helped out in this design by

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ceremonial matters. But for these, a portion at least of the public would make the demand, let us have men of intellect and vital piety to conduct us. Because of these, few make or can make this demand, for the eyes are blinded by rites, and there are not many who suppose that ability and integrity have any necessary connection with religion. This subject cannot be too keenly analysed.—If there be any truth in our assertion that the design of God's book is to produce *moral* men, and that Satan baulks it by substituting *ceremonial* men, it is of deep consequence that we should be aware how the trick is executed. Sacraments are prime agents in effecting the illusion.—Here is a man whose tenour of life is decent, whose mental culture is on the level with the average; in addition to this he administers rites which many believe to be saving, which the word of God, according to their interpretation, declares to be indispensable, which all agree in regarding as things peculiarly solemn. The man is mixed up with these matters reputed to be high and holy, therefore *he* is holy likewise. Is not the human mind so constituted, that all women and most men will derive this inference? If there is a way of reading the bible by which these rites are inseparably or at least closely connected with salvation, if this is the common way of construing it, will not the man who administers be associated in the mind with that which he dispenses? If he has been scattering salvation all around him, who will think so sanely as to doubt whether he is himself saved? It is useless to chase a pirate, if he is in the immediate neighbourhood of a harbour into which you cannot follow him. It is as futile an endeavour to stipulate for a clergy who shall be Levites indeed, when they can entrench themselves behind rites that popular superstition invests with sacredness, and that endow their administrators with sanctity, in a manner that

saves them from the necessity of possessing even ordinary qualities of head and heart. It is to put a lever of tremendous power into the hands of a class, to instal them in the right of managing certain ceremonies that are supposed to exert preternatural influence. After this the man himself may be anything or nothing. He is not seen for the halo which surrounds his head. His function dispenses him from the need of being much more than a machine that can keep time. It spares him the trouble of being much more than a *lay figure*. It is sometimes even found that his mental inanity and moral ugliness assist the illusion, and as in the case of the Lama of Thibet, render the worship more fervent. The inconceivable facility with which these rites manufacture a class of men who are not true Levites, but who on the contrary, are the hateful persons that Scripture exhausts language to describe; the enormous extent in which this brood has prevailed hitherto, the effectual manner in which they oppose the production of a spiritual people, the impossibility that there is whilst these consecrated lurking places remain of coming at the race; these reasons, apart from arguments more direct, cause us to disbelieve in the divine right of Sacraments.

Sixth,—The office and statements of John the Baptist are to us a valid argument against the ceremony. John states the reason of his mission in the following words:—“This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me; for he was before me. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water.” Taking words in their usual signification, this would appear to give to the ceremony the aspect of something specific and local; it would seem to say that it was adopted for a particular purpose, and ceased to have authority after

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that was accomplished. This idea is fortified by the answer that John gave to the question of the Priests and Levites, when they asked him why he baptized, if he was not the Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet: "John answered them, saying, I baptize *with water*." From this remark, we think that a person who duly considered the expression, might without straining, derive the conclusion that to use water, *is not to baptise*. The baptist is asked why, if he was neither this nor that personage, he undertook to baptise. His reply was to this effect: "I do not subject myself to the imputation which you attempt to bring against me; I do not perform the act with which you charge me;—that which I do is not baptism, it is but the appearance or shadow of it." The circumstances under which John executed his function vindicate the notion, that the ceremony which he used was temporary, external, preparatory, and therefore not intended to last. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins." In this there was no selection; no respect was had to character. It was a *forensic* act. A district *en masse* was subjected to an external rite, not because they had already a specific state of mind, but that they might be informed of the state of mind which was becoming, through a visible sign. In other words, a community were directed to look forward to the righteousness of Christ, and the work of the spirit, by means of a symbol that spoke of purity. The indiscriminating manner in which John dispensed that ceremony, told beyond question, that it was a legal and not a spiritual act which he performed. To pour water upon the population of a whole district, might be a significant emblem, as we know it was, but it could be nothing more. The contrast that John repeatedly draws between his baptism and that of

Christ, and the manner in which this is done, compels us to believe that they are to each other as shadow and substance, as type and antitype; that the one is the harbinger, the other the fulfilment, that the one has being until it is superseded by the other: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the holy ghost and with fire."—Surely in this passage the two things are presented in strong opposition, and it does not seem to offer any ground for the supposition, that when the new baptism came in, the old one was still to endure. The language of John is much more susceptible of the interpretation, that the one was to continue till the other entered.

Further, when Christ presented himself to be baptised by John, that functionary declared it to be unfit that the greater should be consecrated by the less. The answer of Jesus whilst it overcame the scruples of John, furnishes a thought which supports our argument. The words were, "suffer it to be so *now*, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." This language to our mind is capable of being thus rendered; indeed it seems scarcely susceptible of a different meaning. Strange as my conduct may appear, it is nevertheless suitable to the circumstances of my lot at present, and to that humiliation which it is my vocation to undergo. Suffer me then to be in this a harbinger of the spirit, a type of my own influence, for by such voluntary prostration is it decreed that I am to offer a propitiation for the sins of men. Whilst it will bear this sense, we cannot see how it will endure to be read as if the ceremony was any thing more than a specific and temporary regulation. We would then construe the language of Jesus on this occasion, as if he connected baptism by water with the period of his humiliation, as if he classed

it along with other types and ordinances which he took out of the way by enduring them ; as if whilst he said let it be so now, he implied, it will last only so long as my residence with men continues. After my ascension, and the outpouring of the spirit, it will have no further being.

Again, John uses the expression, " he must increase. I must decrease." A man does not *decrease*—he *dies*.—John, then, did not refer to his own *person* when he uttered this language. He spoke of himself as the representative of a *system*. He considered himself to be so truly this, that it was correct for him to speak of himself and his system as one. What then was that economy which was to be thrust out by the coming in of another ? We believe that it was a thing made up of the remnants of the ceremonial law, baptism by water being a part of it, which has lasted to our times, but which John with prophetic eye, saw must disappear before the advancing wave of the spiritual kingdom.

The statements of John, then, when united, amount to this, that he came baptising with water, with the intent that by this ordinance he might point out Messiah to Israel, that he was astonished to behold the lowliness of the position which Christ assumed, that he declared that he himself exhibited but an effigy, baptised only with water. that he announced that he should be superseded by a greater personage who would bring in a higher baptism, that he intimated that his economy should decrease, whilst that of Christ should increase. Combining the thoughts that arise out of these several statements, the result that we procure is, that baptism by water belonged to the list of types, to the vocabulary of shadows. We are aware that some theologians have seen the risk that their favourite ordinance would incur, if they allowed it to stand in the same category as the baptism of John. To prevent this.



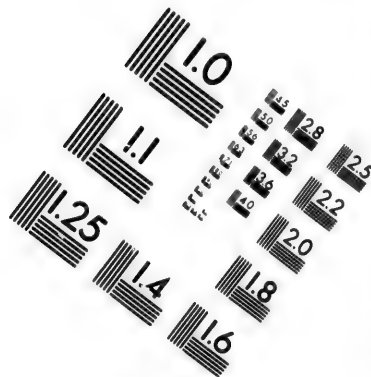
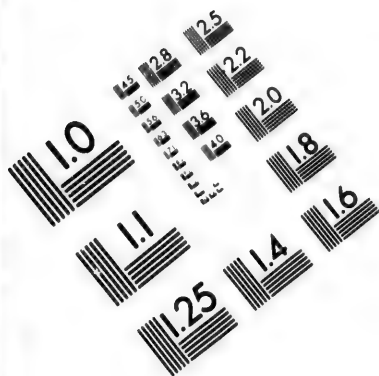
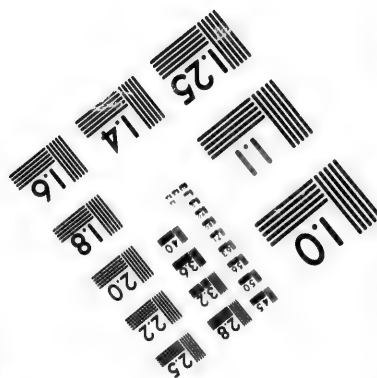
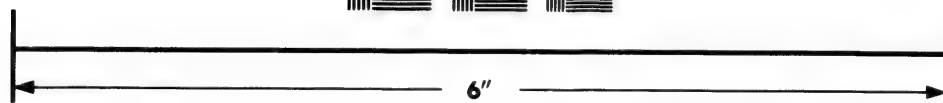
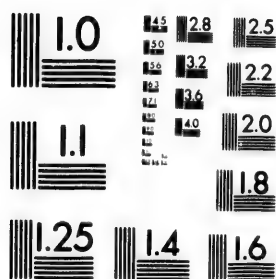


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they try to shift its position. They alledge that John's baptism was not christian baptism, that it was anticipative and temporary, and they would have you to infer that *their* baptism stands on a very different footing. It would puzzle any but a word-mongering, word-tormenting theologian, to understand this absurd distinction. Water associated with John was only water, connected with a duly authorized divine, it is something else. Where John the Baptist performs the ceremony it is prospective and special; where a modern theologian performs it, it is catholic and spiritual. Here is such a transmutation of substances as the chemists of the middle ages were not able to accomplish. We do not deign to reply to so contemptible an equivocation. To our mind, water is water; and if under any circumstances it is more, we would prefer considering that it was so when a great prophet like John dispensed it, rather than when it trickled through the fingers of perhaps a trimming and intriguing sectary. Water is susceptible of being classified as saline, chalybeate, sulphuric, intermittent, hot and tepid. It is reserved for a brainless theology to believe in water *typical*, and water *evangelical*.

Seventh,—A great deal of stress is usually laid on the circumstance, that baptism by water was applied in the case of Jesus Christ. It shews that he was subject to the ceremonial law, but we know this from many other facts. It proves that, like the vessels of the temple he was dedicated to God after being washed with water; but it proves no more. If it was the duty of the children of God to repeat every ceremonial act that their Lord and master did before them, we could sympathise with the argument which insists, that believers and their children should be sprinkled or immersed, because the Apostle and High Priest of their profession submitted to the ceremony. But are there

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not scriptures that entitle us to form an opinion just the opposite of this? One passage informs us that Christ was made *under* the law. Another says that he magnified the law, and made it honourable. Many represent him as taking a yoke or burden upon him, in order that his people might go free. Various scriptures invite believers to rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made his people free, and not to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage. In short, we do not hesitate to affirm that it is the general tenour of the New Testament, that Christ did and suffered many things, not that his people might have to do them over again, but that they might be liberated from such a necessity. When it is proved that the christian is bound to perform every ceremonial act which his master did before him, we shall think that there is force in the argument that because Jesus was dedicated with water so must his followers be. But so long as it is admitted that Jesus was a Jew after the flesh, that he was circumcised, that he frequented the temple, that he observed the pass-over, that he performed the washings and purifications enjoined by the law of Moses: so long as it can be shewn that he did those and other things of the same nature: so long as it can be proved that there was a reason why he submitted to these rites which was peculiar to himself as the scape-goat, and which does not apply to his people, then the argument may run in the very opposite direction to that into which they seek to turn it, and may be made to speak this language, Jesus was washed with water, therefore his followers are dispensed from the rite, for they virtually partake of it in putting on Christ. If every other act of a purely external sort that Christ did was done by him as a *victim*, and not as an *example*, then it appears to be a very direct argument to say, baptism by water is of the same family, and therefore it falls under the same

head. If in the case of every other rite the remark holds good, Christ did it, therefore his people are *not* required to do it, and if it is plain to the view that this also is but a rite, why should it be read in the contrary style to that in which the others are construed? If in regard to every other rite the philosophy be, that the people fulfil it *through their head*, and if this beyond dispute is a rite, why should the plan be changed, why in reference to it should the notion be, that the disciples are to perform it, each for himself? We believe that a dogma will ere long be introduced, that will draw an accurate line of distinction between Christ as *an offering for sin*, and Christ as *an example of righteousness*; and we consider that it is the want of this that leads men to think, that it is a sufficient reason for baptism by water that the Saviour underwent it.

Eighth,—Divines also attach weight to the circumstance, that the disciples of Christ practised baptism by water. We too regard it as an important fact, but not at all in the sense of proving the incumbency of the rite.—At the time when the disciples acted thus, the age of ceremonies was in being. There are obvious reasons why it should have been so, in the fact that the plan of salvation was not yet completed. So long as the resurrection and the ascension were wanting to prove the divinity of the Son of God; so long as the manifestation of the holy spirit was lacking to shew that there are three who bear record in heaven, great essential features were yet wanting to the plan. The disciples, when they went about baptizing, were certainly not in the situation in which we are, they were not even in the same economy. The age of types was still in existence, the era of the spirit was not yet ushered in. There was something prospective then which is present now, and that something consisted of what was quite indispensable to the scheme. Those

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who beheld Christ merely in his humiliation, were not in the position of those who have received positive evidence of his exaltation; and those who scarcely knew so much as that there is a holy ghost, were not on the same plane as those, who are in possession of ample proofs of the being and qualities of that divine agent. Hence it might be suitable to say and do things then, which it would be unfit to do now. When there were great essential parts of the scheme yet to be revealed, the relation of men to the gospel was certainly different from what it is now that all is revealed. At that period when there were things yet to be disclosed, we find that it was common to use figurative expressions, and to perform symbolic acts indicative of what was yet to come. Thus we hear the following language employed by Jesus: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. *But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the holy ghost was not yet given: because that Jesus was not yet glorified.*" Probably our Lord had reference to the same thought, when in his conversation with the woman of Samaria he said, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And we do not doubt, that amongst other things he had reference to this idea, when he girded himself with a towel, and washed the feet of the disciples. Along the period when the ceremonial system endured, water was a standing type of the spirit. So much was this the case, that when Jesus promises to slake the thirst of his people, holy writ adds, "this spake he of the spirit," and as if to account for this allegorical

mode of speech, it adds, "*for the holy ghost was not yet given.*" We consider it quite a sufficient explanation of the fact that the disciples baptized, that the holy ghost was not yet given; we deem it an adequate reason why we should not imitate their conduct, that the holy ghost *is* given.

Ninth,—The opinion which makes a doctrine and not a rite of baptism, endows the last words of Jesus with a dignity suitable to the occasion, makes the four evangelists agree in the same thought at the end of their gospels, and puts a commission into the hand of the Christian, worthy of his high vocation. There is something peculiarly minute in the ordinary opinion, that our Lord terminates his sojourn on the earth by giving directions for the perpetuation of a rite. It seems a most unfit ending to so renowned a chapter. We can hardly be severe with that section of the Church which thinks that a rite on which such peculiar stress is laid, must have some mysterious saving influence. But let it be supposed, for argument's sake, that the doctrine and not the ceremony, is designed, and then a sense is obtained which befits the occasion, which is more germane to the meaning of the Greek, which quadrates well with the idea that other scriptures authorise us to attach to the expression *the name*, which reconciles the four gospels, and which gives a new aspect to the functions of the believer, whereby also in our judgment, it is connected with the most splendid results. All the change on the language necessary to realise these consequences, is merely to read "*Baptizontes autous eis to onoma*," baptizing them *into* the name instead of *in* the name. Even this is not indispensable; for if the thought of dyeing be designed, *in* is preferable to *into*.—By this slight alteration, which scholars allow is the exact value of the original, all the results that we have specified

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above may be legitimately procured. On this hypothesis, Jesus does not spend his last moments on the earth in giving directions about a sign, but in enjoining his followers to be active in the work of multiplying his image.—How great an interval is there between the two notions; how unsuitable to the time and the personage does the one seem, and how very suitable the other! In accordance with this view, the Son of God having fulfilled all righteousness, and having promised to the disciples that not long after his departure the Comforter should come, rounds off his message by telling them how they should act, when that personage was fairly disclosed. He who because of love to man suffered himself to be slain from the foundation of the world; he who spent his time while on the earth, in going about to do good; he who so frequently exposed the difference between the apparent and the substantial; he who in so many instances forewarned the faithful of the mighty works that they should be enabled to do, because he went to the Father; he does not, according to our view, mar all this in the last scene, and immediately before the curtain drops. Standing tiptoe on the earth, and just about to vault into the world above, he does not give the go by to former sayings and actions. Having in all his former conduct shewn himself to be the Son of God, by the incomparable grandeur of his sayings and doings, he does not at the very ending of the eventful story, exhibit the feelings of a posture-master. He sustains his character, he maintains his philanthropy and wisdom to the last; before he departs he virtually says to his disciples, if you love my character, let it be your business, as soon as you are endowed with power from on high, to go forth and infuse it into other men, laying my spirit upon them, rendering them partakers of the divine nature, baptizing them *into the name* of the Father, and

of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. This idea whilst it is agreeable to the language, is also in keeping with other parts of scripture, is worthy of him who announces it, and is honourable to those to whom it is addressed. It is surely making more mysteries than the bible requires, to suppose that the founder of our faith expended his last words in prescribing a rite. It is certainly to help the cause of the scoffer, to adhere to this view, if the words will bear a construction that is at once in harmony with revelation in general, and honourable to the character of the Most High. This version of the passage removes the enigma, and represents the Messiah during the last moments of his terrestrial career, as exhibiting interest, not in a rite but in a fact—as feeling concern not in the dispensation of water, but in the diffusion of the spirit. Let men duly ponder which of the two notions is the more evangelical and rational.

We further like this mode of reading the commission, because it attaches a meaning to *the name*, that seems good and profitable in this particular instance, and that likewise opens up the sense of many other passages where it occurs. By endowing the expression with the idea of *nature* or *essence*, all such passages as “thou shalt not take the *name* of the Lord thy God in vain,” “that thy *name* is near thy wondrous works declare,” “the *name* of the Lord is a strong tower—the righteous runneth into it and is safe,” “where two or three are gathered together in my *name*, there am I in the midst of them,” “whatsoever ye shall ask in my *name*, that will I do, that the father may be glorified in the son,” “hitherto have ye asked nothing in my *name* ;” by giving this sense to the term, all such texts are invested with a new and an important meaning, and out of their combined signification would arise quite a new chapter in theology. Founding upon this interpretation, be-

nevers should have their attention directed to the doctrine that to take the name in vain, is to insult the character : that for men to be met together in the name of Christ, is to be united in the bond of the spirit : that to ask in his name, is to request heavenly things at the prompting of his spirit and with a view to his glory. And if this be a higher and purer idea than is usually annexed to the term, out of it would arise better thoughts and conduct in the directions affected by the doctrine. We approve then of a doctrinal and not a ritual version of the commission, because in the course of procuring it, the phrase *the name* is brought up to the meaning which we believe that it deserves, and because by this means, many texts which at present suggest no suitable idea, are rendered luminous, significant, and moral.

Yet again, we adopt the opinion that Christ commanded his followers to go forth and baptise men, not with water, but with the spirit, because this interpretation without offending language, and without militating against any thing else that occurs in the bible, reconciles the statements of the four evangelists, and by so doing adds a valuable thought to our theology. The expression of *Matthew* is, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost : teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." The corresponding statement of *Mark*, seems to be, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned." The analogous sentiment in *Luke* is to this effect, "And that repentance and remission of sins shall be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witness of these things. And behold I send the promise of my Father upon you :

but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high." In order to obtain a parallel idea from *John*, all that is requisite is, to suppose that the conversation which he represents Christ as having with *Peter*, is addressed to that disciple with a regard to all the others, "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these?—He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep." Combining the sense of the four, the followers of Jesus are commanded to go forth and baptize, or engraft men into the divine nature, they are informed that where this baptism takes effect, there salvation is planted; they are apprised that to fulfil this commission, to execute this baptism, is the same thing as to preach repentance and remission of sins, is the same act as to feed Christ's sheep, and to feed his lambs. But before we can properly derive any inferences from these four narratives, it is necessary to dispose of a difficulty which occurs in the second of them.—In the passage that we have cited from *Luke*, there is an expression which the advocates of baptism by water regard as very conclusive in favour of that practice. It is said that "he that believeth *and* is baptized shall be saved." From this they very correctly infer, that there are two parts in salvation, and they very naturally conclude that the ceremony of baptism must needs be one of the two

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We cannot much censure them because of this idea, for to
 the appearance it seems just. We believe, however, that
 scripture supplies the means of proving that the notion is
 only *apparently* sound. We are convinced that there is
 another view that fits much better with revelation, and
 with reason. We are in the habit of considering that
 there are *two* great departments of human nature, when
 we survey the subject from the points of observation and
 philosophy. We ought not then to be staggered, should
 we come to find that scripture also recognizes two sections
 in the same topic. When we put the bible to one side,
 we perceive that observers now, and in past times, have
 recognised two divisions in human nature. We ought,
 therefore, to be pleased rather than annoyed to discover
 that the word of God conducts us to the like result.
 The most of those who are conversant with this subject,
 speak of the mind and the affections, the *animus* and the
anima, reason and the will, the intellectual and the moral
 nature. They use different terms, but on the whole they
 all come at conclusions something like those which we
 have named. The bible makes use of similar distinctions.
 In one place it affirms that the whole *head* is sick, and
 that the whole *heart* is faint. In another instance it gives
 forth the statement, that even the *mind* and *conscience* are
 defiled. In another passage it speaks of those, who fulfil
 the desires of the *flesh* and of the *mind*. And in a very
 remarkable text in the epistle to the Hebrews, and one
 which is quoted almost verbally from the Old Testament,
 we meet with these words, “For this is the covenant that
 I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith
 the Lord : I will put my laws into their *mind*, and write
 them in their *hearts*; and I will be to them a God, and
 they shall be to me a people.” In these four passages, we
 perceive that the nature of man is described with a re-

ference to these two segments. What is still more to the point, there are *several* scriptures which in describing the act of conversion have regard to these distinctions, and represent it as twofold. "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, he said unto them, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost *since ye believed*? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." Again, "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John." And again we find this statement, "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also *after that ye believed*, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."

These different passages prove two things: first, that Scripture is in the habit of allowing for two compartments in human nature apparently equivalent to the ordinary distinctions of head and heart; second, that in various instances it makes references to these two sections in describing the work of conversion, and speaks of men as *believing* when only part of the process was gone through, and *before* they had received the Spirit. Founding on this criticism, the text in Mark presents no difficulty, because parallel ideas occur in other parts of Scripture. It is seen to be coincident with statements met with elsewhere. It is perceived to agree with definitions of the mind sanctioned by repeated instances in holy writ. It is discerned not to be a new or anomalous idea, but one that harmonises with a rule previously laid down. Instead of

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expressing the thought usually derived from it, that he who is converted and after that is washed by water, shall be saved—a weak notion, one that puts a rite on a level with regeneration, and justifies all the blasphemous fictions that have been circulated in regard to the efficacy of Sacraments—it is made to indicate the following just, wholesome, scriptural, and philosophical dogma; man in becoming a partaker of the divine nature, passes through two gradations—in the first of these the intellect only is concerned, it balances the proofs, and finding them adequate, the mind is convinced, the man *believes*; in the second, the will and the affections become engaged—what was speculative before becomes practical now, what was abstract becomes personal, the divine influence takes possession of the nature—the man is *baptized*. To get at this view, one has not to strain, but to collate Scripture. By adopting it, the metaphysics of regeneration are further unveiled; the sense of other passages is explained.—By receiving it we are preserved from the monstrous absurdity of placing a ceremony in line with the Holy Spirit. In taking it, one feels that he is within the circle of truths already admitted, and observation comes in to remind him that every speculative theologian whose mind only is engaged and convinced, is an example of one who merely *believes*, that each sincere Christian in whom the head and the heart combine to make him what he is, is an illustration of the man who believes *and* is baptized. Texts occur that speak of persons as believing who had not received the spirit; there are many more of them than we have cited; but if this rule is established in many cases, we should not be surprised that it applies in the present; and thus with the consent of other passages of the Bible, we are permitted to understand this one as affirming that the man whose intellect is enlightened, whose affections

are laid hold of, is saved. There is nothing awkward in the statement. It is true to the physiology of the mind, it falls in with the general tenor of Scripture. In admitting it we receive that which clears away a difficulty, and which makes none, which gives us the spirit instead of a ceremony, which throws light upon many texts hitherto unexplained, which adds a principle to mental philosophy in connection with holy writ. Matthew then exhorts believers to go forth and baptize men *into* the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Mark leaves no doubt what is meant by this, when he informs us that this baptism saves. Luke gives the same thought in his style, when he represents Christ as enjoining his followers to preach repentance and remission of sins, beginning at Jerusalem. John, by relating a conversation between Jesus and Peter, wherein the disciple is exhorted to feed the sheep and to feed the lambs, puts us in possession of a similar idea.— Thus four historians, who are in the habit of exhibiting *substantial* agreement with *formal* difference, continue this method to the last. Four men too, who whenever there is a topic of more than ordinary importance, generally make a point each to touch upon it, are seen to do this up to the end of their records; and when this singularly momentous matter of the commission is the subject in question, all four are beheld coming forward to render the picture very faithful, by each depicting it in his own style, and from his own direction.

Further, we prefer reading the commission in a spiritual sense, because by so doing we find ourselves standing upon holy ground. An injunction to go forth and use water, has nothing about it that is either moral or distinctive. Subject a man of real mind to the regulation, and you either tempt him to doubt the divinity of the gospel, or you reduce him to carry a weight at which his

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feelings revolt. His spirit takes umbrage at it, not be-
cause it is a mystery, but because it seems a flat folly.—
Let it be read as an injunction to sprinkle or immerse,
and Scripture is seen helping the formalist and hypocrite
by setting up a sign that any one can employ, and by af-
firming of it that it saves. We aver without the least
hesitation, that if this view be taken, holy writ furnishes
a plea for all that has been said and done by that class
who have affirmed that salvation is in the Sacraments,
and that this idea, whilst it is pernicious under any cir-
cumstances, would if it fairly got abroad, work incalcu-
lable mischief in times like ours that abound with per-
sons who feel just enough of interest in religion to fall
into the first pit that presents itself. On the other hand,
let the passage be construed as an exhortation to baptize
with the spirit, and countless good and glorious conse-
quences result from it. It is the last admonition which
the Saviour gives; how suitable is it to the occasion!—
In its immediate neighbourhood are promises in which he
tells what prodigies the Church shall perform; that they
shall “cast out devils,” that they shall “speak with new
tongues,” that they shall “take up serpents,” that “they
shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover;” how
proper are such functions where a commission is given to
believers to wield the powers of the spirit! When he
promulgates the commission he adds, “and lo I am with
you alway even to the end of the world;” how peculiarly
appropriate does this promise appear, when taken in con-
nection with a command to perform what so completely
transcends the power of man, to execute which requires
the perpetual presence of the divine personage who lays
it on his disciples!

Tenth,—Scripture distinguishes between John’s bap-
tism and that of Christ. Not to advert to those cases in

which John himself contrasts the two, there is a series of passages wherein Christ and the Apostles speak of the baptism of John as a thing standing by itself. Thus,—
 “And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like manner will tell you by what authority I do these things. ‘The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?’”
 Again,—“John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.” In another instance,—“And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.” The Apostle Peter speaks thus in the book of the Acts,—“Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.” In another place of the book, the same Apostle expresses himself to this effect,—“That word, I say, ye know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached.” Paul employs similar language,—“Of this man’s seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus; when John had first preached before his coming the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel.” Of Apollos it is said,—“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.” Paul thus addresses certain disciples at Ephesus,—“Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, unto what then were ye baptised? And they said, unto John’s baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the

people, that they should believe on him which should come after him: that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptised in the name of the Lord Jesus." But this baptism which was peculiar to John, so characteristic as to be called by his name, was baptism by water. How can it be said to be distinctive of him, if it is still incumbent? With what propriety can it enter into an economy which claims to be in possession of the baptism of the spirit, and which at the same time pretends to believe that there is but "one baptism?" With what rationality can we say that we acknowledge but *one*, when we manifestly practice and insist upon *two*? With what justice can we alledge that there is a difference between our rite, and that practised by John; is there any principle of philosophy that can draw a real line of distinction between water used in the year thirty, and water in the year eighteen hundred and forty six?

Eleventh,—By far the most specious plea in favour of water-baptism, is the argument, that the apostles practised it. Hitherto, it has been regarded as final. In the nature of things this opinion cannot last much longer. Society is coming to number many among its members who should be able to comprehend the distinction between an apostle *recording*, and an apostle *acting*. It is understood in some degree with regard to Moses, David, or Elijah—why should it appear too hard to be credited in the case of the Twelve? The idea that is practically entertained in reference to them is, that they are infallible and immaculate: and it is all the more dangerous that it exists in a latent form, and shrinks from a frank avowal. On the one side Protestants are ready to arrogate to themselves the credit of being clear of the heresy of worshipping the saints. On the other hand, when a supposed advantage is to be gained by embracing the opposite tenet,

they are willing to hold it in a covert manner. When they wish to seem enlightened, they declare that they believe in but one faultless being. When they desire to keep firm possession of a sacrament, they are prepared to contradict the former position, by receiving apostolic practice as a rule not to be questioned. By thus abjuring what it really holds, the Protestant Church in this question presents itself in such a slimy, slippery, treacherous shape, that a man feels at once alarmed and disgusted to take hold of the reptile. If the apostles are to be admitted as infallible, the words of the Son of God are to be disallowed when he says, that there is none good but one, that is God. If they are to be received on this footing, we cease to have but one mediator between God and man, and are forced to believe in many. If they are to be put upon this list, they are to be rated as occupying a station different from the other contributors to the canon, Moses, Joshua, Solomon, or Daniel—persons that both scripture and reason would represent as of as high a moral lineage as they. If they are to be set in this anomalous predicament, we are reduced to suppose that we have two families in the Bible, one aiming at perfection, and the other quite attaining to it. If they are to be elevated to this height, we are forced to place them there in direct despite of their protestations to the contrary, and by so doing to pronounce them infallible and fallible in the same breath.—If they are to be classed in this category, we reduce ourselves to declare the Church wrong in not having received *all* their acts as canonical and binding, and we oblige ourselves to adopt various practices that could not possibly advance, but would most assuredly deteriorate the doctrine and practice of the Churches. We frankly allow that in several instances the Apostles practised or sanctioned baptism by water, but we deliberately conceive that

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it is a much cheaper avowal to alledge, that in so doing they acted *unwisely*, than by maintaining that they did well, to erect Apostolic practice into an imperative rule, and underlie all the results that flow from it. The reason of the thing is in our favour, because it decidedly says that the probability is that the Apostles resembled other men or other christians, in the absence of express evidence to prove that they were different. Now we believe that it will hardly be pretended that there exists such proof. No doubt there are many passages which go to shew that they were to be endowed with power from on high, and that in virtue of this they were to do wonderful works. But in the *first place*, such promises do not appear to declare that these gifts were to be conferred exclusively on the Apostles, but look as if they were intended for the benefit of the Church, "even unto the end of the world." In the *second place*, even supposing that these powers descended upon the Apostles alone, that in no degree proves that they were to be exempted from all human frailties. These powers actually did come down upon many besides the twelve, which shews that they were not distinguished from all the rest of men in this particular; and even had they lighted on none but the Apostles, it would after all have been a question of *gifts* rather than of *graces*. Paul shews very plainly in a well known passage, that the two are not to be confounded; nay, that a man may be possessed of the most eminent of these gifts without having that grace which saves. He addresses churches that notoriously enjoyed gifts such as prophecy and tongues, and censures them for the want of moral qualities that he specifies, whereby he proves not merely that spiritual gifts did not render men impeccable, but that they did not always shut them out from the commission of very dark crimes. These powers then, did not

reside in the Apostles alone, and if they had, they do not prove that they were thereby exempted from the possibility of doing wrong. From many circumstances, it would seem that these gifts were *occasional*, and a power which a man possessed only at times, could not certainly act as an infallible principle to cause him to behave with perfect moral rectitude in every instance. Although these points seem to lie quite on the surface, it is strange how very little they have been adverted to; it is wonderful to think what muddiness of mind has been evinced, what a resolution has been manifested to confound occasional gifts with absolute impeccability, and what an inclination is shewn to this hour to apply the very formidable word *blasphemer* to the man, who ventures to draw a line where there seems so much room for one. Continuing to view the subject from the side of reason, if the Apostles were infallible in the manner in which it is contended that they were, they cease to stand before us as examples in any degree, they stalk past as automaton who were not left to any collision of feelings, any clashing between the flesh and the spirit, who had no merit in acting well, and who while they were placed on a footing that renders them quite anomalous, were so situated as to convey no instruction to us. There is much that is edifying in a course of righteousness, if it be run in the teeth of temptation;—there is little or nothing to be learned from it, if the man who pursues it could not have done otherwise. The victim of blind fate cannot yield us instruction, because he ceases to be a human being susceptible of like passions with ourselves. Many other considerations might be adduced to show from the side of reason that it was more likely that the apostles should be fallible than the contrary. After all, however, the most cogent argument is that which brings forward proofs that they actually did wrong.

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When at the outset of the Acts they cast lots and chose a successor to Judas by this method, they behaved foolishly, and that is manifested by the fact that their nomination was not confirmed, since it is obvious that Paul was chosen by God to be the twelfth Apostle. When near the beginning of the history, Peter and John went up to the temple at the ninth hour, or time of the evening sacrifice, they surely betrayed a clinging to old Jewish practices. When a considerable time after the day of Pentecost, Peter was told by a vision to visit the household of Cornelius, he was then far from being an infallible person, when he needed to be taught so rudimentary a truth as that the Gentiles were admitted to be fellow heirs along with the Jews. When Peter ate with the Gentiles, and when Jewish witnesses came on the ground, he separated himself from them, we know from an express canonical statement, that he exhibited a want of proper integrity and courage. When Paul and Barnabas fell out on their missionary tour and parted company, who will dare to affirm that they conducted themselves in an immaculate manner? When Paul, who tells us that if he preached circumcision the offence of the cross would cease, and again that neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature; when that same Paul circumcised Timothy *because of the Jews*, for *they knew all* that his father was a Greek, who but a bigot and therefore a liar would maintain, that he acted with consistency and rectitude? When Paul said to the High Priest, "God shall smite thee thou whited wall," no sane man will pretend that his command of temper was perfect—he acted naturally enough, but his behaviour was not faultless. When on the same occasion he apologised, not because he was a *man* to whom he thus spoke, but because he had learned that he was the *High Priest*,

who will make it plain that he drew a distinction of an evangelical kind? When a synod of Apostles addressed a missive to some Gentile converts, in which among other topics, they commanded them to abstain from things strangled and from blood, was the injunction profound, cardinal, did it not bear the cast of Judaism and the Law? When Paul, although warned by a Prophet, must needs go up to Jerusalem, did he or did he not slight an admonition from heaven? When he assigned as his motive that he wished to be there at the time of the feast, was he or was he not actuated by formal reasons, foreign to the spirit of the gospel, as he himself expounds it in his epistles? When on arriving at Jerusalem he went through the vow of a Nazarene, did he not by this conduct indicate that he was not delivered from the bondage of the law?—When James persuaded him to go into the temple, along with four men who had a similar vow, did not James exhibit a trimming temper; did not Paul manifest the same disposition in listening to him; did not both show themselves to be men of ceremonies in a high degree? This happened nearly thirty years after the ascension; and if the apostles were so much under the dominion of ordinances, when their career was so far advanced, what wonder if they did not rise above them at an earlier stage in their history. When Paul defending himself against the charges that were brought against him at Jerusalem, sought to divide the Assembly by appealing to the party of the Pharisees, declaring himself to be a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee; surely he did not adopt a course which Christians of all ages to come are bound to regard as of perfect beauty. His conduct proved that he spoke the truth when he declared himself to be a Pharisee both by descent and education, for it was infected by the leaven of that sect. It was political—it was time-serving. It was

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not the demeanour of a man who placed entire confidence in God. It was in the spirit of the order that Cromwell is reported to have given his soldiers, "Fear God, and keep your powder dry." Again, when Paul appealed from Festus to Caesar, it appears to us that he followed a course quite in the line of that sort of conduct which we are in the habit of seeing temporising and wordly men pursue. It was not criminal, but it was like a Jewish lawyer. It was not vicious; but as little was it of that sort which denotes implicit leaning on the divine arm. We are inclined to attribute the succession of disasters that chequered the latter days of Paul, to the manœuvring disposition which he showed in these instances. He was enabled to glorify God in the difficulties by which he was environed: but we believe that he brought these upon himself by persisting in going up to Jerusalem, and by paltering whilst there. If these allegations can be brought with any propriety against Paul, who was in some respects the chief of the Apostles, it is not a reasonable presumption that the others were absolutely without spot. If they can be laid to his charge until near the end of his course, it is not to be supposed that the earlier portions of his history were free from sins and errors. The Church would do well to take more enlarged views of this question. If the *spirit* of Scripture be against an opinion, and only the *practice* of certain holy men favour it, it deserves to be enquired which of the two is to give the verdict. Common sense says it is likely that the Apostles, being men, were liable to error, and that for the following reasons— that all other men in and out of Scripture, were of this character; that the statements of the Bible are to the effect that the taint of sin has polluted the whole human race without any exceptions; that reason appears to say that if these men were not exposed to the assaults of evil,

there could be nothing praiseworthy in them when they did well ; and that we repeatedly hear from their own lips, that they looked upon themselves as subject to like passions with others.

Observation comes in to the aid of reason, and it affirms that in a certain number of instances, in some of which the whole church acquiesces, they did things that shewed ignorance, or formalism, or cunning, or some other evil inclination. What then is the value of the circumstance that in some cases they practised baptism by water ? It is wonderfully less than is commonly supposed. They were Jews, and generally speaking, men of mature years ; they were habituated to ceremonies, and to little less from their childhood upwards ; does not the reason of the matter say that they would be likely to advance in knowledge by those gradual steps which in every other instance is the mode that we see the convert pursue ; and does it not declare that when they did go wrong there would be no case in which they would be more likely to err, than by evincing that inclination to ceremonies which during the first half of their life they had been trained to regard as religion ? They had lived in forms along side of the Son of God.— In his society, at his bidding, or with his sanction, they had observed the ordinances of the law. When so much had been done to accustom their minds to one mode of thinking, would it be astonishing if they persisted in it after the necessity had ceased ? When the holy spirit was manifested, the doctrine which his advent preached was that the time had now fully come when it became men to abstain from worshipping God by the form and letter.— Was it to be expected that persons who had been so sedulously instructed in the contrary plan should learn the lesson all at once ? Is it not more in accordance with what we usually perceive, to suppose that they would come

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at it by degrees, and through many errors? When we find that a vision was necessary in order to teach Peter so rudimentary a fact as that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, is it to be imagined that he and the other apostles would come intuitively, and without a mistake, at the other points of the new system? When we remark what tremendous power a rite early inculcated exerts upon the minds even of the wise and good, is it any slur upon the character of the apostles to affirm, that they were not more than men in this respect, and that they occasionally yielded to the influence of feelings which long custom and other circumstances had embedded deeply in their nature?

When we advance up to the several cases in which the apostles practised the ceremony, we find that the argument in its favour is not so strong as when we consider them *en masse*. There are *nine* instances in which baptism of one sort or other is practised; but they have not the weight that would belong to them, *if they were all of one kind*. We believe that they are *heterogeneous*. In the first case it is not clear that water was used. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The language appears capable of the construction, that it was the baptism of the spirit which was conferred on this occasion. The second case is that where Philip baptizes the people of Samaria. The narrative in this instance would point to the conclusion, that water was employed; but it was not an apostle who officiated. The same thing may be said of the third instance, in which Philip baptizes the Eunuch. It was not an apostle who acted; it was at the request of the Ethiopian that it was done; it was perform-

ed in such a manner as to imply that it was no essential matter; "if thou believest with all thine heart thou *mayest*." The fourth case was that where Ananias baptizes Paul. We consider that water was *not* used in this instance. The narrative says, "And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized." In the first part of this description, Ananias announces that he is come to perform *two* acts upon Paul: to cure his blindness, and to give him the Holy Ghost. In the second part we see the two conditions fulfilled; the scales fall from his eyes, he arises, and *in receiving the spirit*, is baptized. Unless the passage is understood in this manner, the relation is incomplete, and we see only one, and that the least of the two promises ratified.

The fifth case is where Peter baptizes the household of Cornelius. There is no doubt but that water is employed at this time. The circumstances lead us to consider, that it was one of those plain cases of *propitiation* of which several occur in the course of this book. The Jews were looking on; they were staggered to perceive that their exclusive privileges were gone: "And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." When Peter perceiving their feelings, said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost *as well as we*;" when he thus addressed them, does he not seek to remove scruples, and in doing so was

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it not very natural that he should have recourse to a rite that was sure to be acceptable to his countrymen? It appears a very similar case to that in which we find Paul circumcising Timothy because of the Jews. The sixth instance makes no mention of water; it is that in which Paul at Philippi baptizes Lydia and her household. The seventh case occurs at the same place, Paul and Silas are the ministers, the keeper of the prison and his family are the subjects. The eighth instance is at Corinth—"And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized." It is more than neutralized by the statement which Paul makes in his first epistle to the church in that city, where he thanks God that he baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanus, and where he says that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel. There is but one baptism, and it saves; yet if we admit baptism by water to be an entity at all, it is the one baptism which saves; and according to this, Paul thanks God that he *saved* none of them but the few whom he specifies.—The ninth and last case takes place at Ephesus, where Paul finds certain disciples. It is thus related: "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Were they baptized *in the hearing of this statement*—or are there two acts in this incident? Were they first convinced of the divinity of Jesus, and then were they dedicated by water? We do not pronounce an opinion. The gospels give no countenance to the idea that baptism by water was to be a permanent institution; the epistles sanction it even less. But how

tween these two authorities there stands a book, that recounts the doings of the apostles and some of their Acolytes. This book relates nine examples in which allusion is made to baptism. These cases are not of one family; they are not homogeneous. Sometimes the act is performed *before*, sometimes *after* the spirit had been received. Sometimes by an apostle, sometimes by an evangelist only. In some of the cases it is plain that water was used, in others it is doubtful, and in others it appears almost certain that it was *not*. Even when apostles were the agents the act was performed by men who in other cases shewed themselves liable to error, capable of wrong feelings, prone to things ceremonial, and disposed to tamper with rites in order to propitiate the prejudices of their countrymen.—But these same men come forward on a higher footing—in a capacity in which their frailties had no power to show themselves, in a character in which their humanity was swallowed up for the time by a mightier influence; they exhibit themselves as channels of inspiration, as penmen of the Holy Ghost. And do they in this statelier attitude vindicate and confirm all that they did as mere men?—They do not. They blame their own acts in a variety of particulars; they censure them in this case. To which then are we to listen; to an Apostle where he was exposed to error; or to an Apostle where he preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Is there be contradiction as there is in this question, whom are we to obey—the Apostle acting, or the Apostle recording? Is there room for a doubt?

Twelfth,—We are of opinion that another very conclusive argument against this rite is to be derived from the *Epistles*. If it is anything at all, it *saves*. But the *Epistles* compose nearly a half of the whole New Testament; within so large a space an ordinance that carries

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salvation with it, would surely be mentioned and insisted on. If it is not, if on the contrary the statements that are made respecting it deal with the rite as a thing exploded, and comment on the matter only as it is a *doctrine*; if such be the tenor of this large section of holy writ, the inference to which it points is very cogent. Almost half of the New Testament is occupied with letters, that certain of the Apostles address to the churches. These by the admission of critics, treat of all the topics connected with the plan of redemption. They are not satisfied with marking out the stronger features of the system, they enter into fine details. They do not merely mention doctrines in a general manner, they analyse their parts and properties, they state their application to different cases, they follow them out into their remoter effects. But this vast magazine of theory and practice, this seemingly complete digest of doctrine and precept, does not enjoin a rite which according to hypothesis is essential to salvation. This store room that contains so many subjects of *secondary* consequence, excludes this article of *primary* moment!—Moreover, these Epistles display their writers in their most exalted capacity. Whilst penning them *they are not exposed to human frailty*. They are placed in such a predicament, as to oblige us to regard all that they put down, as the very mind of the spirit. They occupy a position that invites us to think of them not so much as men as *pipes* through which the will of God is conveyed from heaven down to earth. Probably the only exceptions to this rule are those few instances, in which Paul draws a line, and makes the statement, that he is not sure whether in the particular case before him he speaks his own opinion or that of the spirit. These exceptions corroborate the general principle, and warrant the dogma that where such reservation is made, the sacred writers considered

themselves to be under the power of *plenary* inspiration. So then here are many writings, the composition of several Apostles, taken together they make up nearly the half of the New Testament, they seem to treat of every subject that is to be found in any other part of the Bible; they appear to be designed as an encyclopaedic statement of all that is to be believed and practiced, they were dictated by men under the direct and entire guidance of the Holy Ghost, and these whilst they allude to baptism many times as a *principle*, never in one case refer to it as a *ceremony to be enacted*! What is there to oppose to this proof? Nothing more than this, that in another part of the volume which represents the Apostles in another and a *lower attitude*, which tells of many errors that they committed, and which more particularly shows them repeatedly evincing an improper leaning towards things ritual, they fell into this ceremony in several instances. Are the two things of equal weight? The Old Testament has already taught us to compare the books of Kings with the Psalms or the Proverbs, and to note the difference when David and Solomon indite, and when they act their part like other men. Why should we be unable to go through the same process in the New Testament; why should we find it so impracticable a task to deal with the Epistles and the Acts of the Apostles on the same principle; why should we think it less possible that an Apostle should be in action than a King or a Prophet of the old dispensation? We proceed to specify the passages in which the subject is mentioned, either by the name baptism, or some other equivalent term.

Rom. VI. 3, 4,—“Know ye not, that so many of us were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death.” In this case baptism makes the convert

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with Christ, so that his death becomes available to him. But other scriptures predicate this of regeneration, therefore we conclude that it is the baptism of the spirit which is here intended. I Cor. I. 13—19. In this passage the term occurs several times, but in what style? Paul thanks God that he baptized none of them but Crispus and Gaius; Paul declares that he was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel. Can this be construed as enjoining the rite? I Cor. VI. 11,—“And such were some of you; but ye are *washed*, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God.” Here washed is used convertibly with sanctified and justified, whêreby we are given to understand that a doctrine and not a ceremony is meant. I Cor. X. 1, 2,—“Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” Whatever opinion may be entertained of this passage, it can hardly be represented as favouring a rite. It is rather capable of being interpreted in the opposite sense. It seems to place baptism by water on the same plane with the other events in the history of the house of Israel, and which we know to be typical. I Cor. XII. 13.—“For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.” This statement removes all doubt as to what is the baptism by which union with God is produced; it asserts what other passages permit us to infer. I Cor. XV. 29,—“Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all?—Why are they then baptized for the dead?” It is usual to consider this as a difficult text; many curious speculations have been formed as to its possible meaning, and customs that never existed have been by dint of strong fancy, called into being in order to explain it. Our inclination

is to believe that it expresses an idea of usual occurrence, and one parallel to that contained in the passage already cited from the Romans, and so regarding it we would be disposed to invest it with a meaning such as this,—The philosophy of Christianity is to the effect that faith unites the believer to his Lord; but what avails it to be incorporated with him, to be baptized into his body, if he be dead? Whatever conclusions may be derived from this position, it must be viewed as a fact and not as a form or symbol. Gal. III. 27,—“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” Can any thing be conceived more decided in the way of affirming, that the one baptism that distinguishes the gospel is the spiritual act that produces a change of heart? Eph. IV. 5,—“One Lord, one faith, one baptism.” What is that fact that stands on the same level, that enjoys equal dignity with the unity of the divine nature; with the essential oneness of belief? Is it a rite, or is it a doctrine?—It cannot be both. Eph. V. 25, 26,—“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church; and gave himself for it: That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” To cleanse the Church by the word, is according to this passage so much the washing of water of the present economy, that the two terms are employed interchangeably. Col. II. 12,—“Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.” The *burial* must resemble the *resurrection* that is here spoken of. It is by the assumption of a new nature that converts are risen with Christ; the death which precedes this event must be the dying to sin of which mention is repeatedly made. The death of Christ being rendered efficient for your salvation through baptism, that is to say thorough conversion,

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are risen into newness of life; such is the indubitable sense of the text. Heb. VI. 1, 2—“Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.” We learn from this passage that the evangelical form of this subject is a *doctrine*. We also learn from it that the doctrine corresponds not only with one form of the rite, but with all the forms. Thus both the expressions here used favour our view. It is a doctrine; and this term, harmonising with the whole genius of the New Testament, reduces us to consider that the gospel acts in a homogeneous manner with this question, deals with the ceremony here as it does with it elsewhere, leaves what is ritual to the old economy, and carries the thought over to the new. A *doctrine* in its texture presents nothing that is opposed to the general constitution of the New Testament. It is of the same family with the other articles; it is like every thing else; it is entitled to admission into the house without entering into an explanation. It is different with a *rite*; it is not of the same substance with the rest; it is not in concord but in marked discord with the other notes, and nothing can secure for it a title to be received but several unambiguous scriptures that declare it to be an exception, and in spite of this, imperatively claim an adoption for it into the canon. The one goes in on its own authority, because it is in rule; the other cannot go in but *by command*, because it is in contrariety to all the other parts. A thought a principle coincides with every thing else and goes into the society of the other institutes without the necessity of an explanation; a mere ceremony on the contrary, requires that a special provision be made for

it, for without this it has no right to a place along side of things fundamental and moral. And as to the term baptisms, its *plurality* is not without significance. When Paul in the Colosians makes use of the expression, "or of the Sabbaths," which is the precise sense of the original Greek, he adds an argument to our list, because he puts the seventh day in company of a decidedly Mosaic character. He as much as says, let no man involve you in questions of a legal and ceremonial nature; let no man entangle you in controversies as to sabbaths of which there were many, and of which all are superseded or commuted by the doctrines of a new economy. And so in the present instance: the doctrine of baptisms leads to the conclusion that the work of the spirit is the antitype of all those ritual circumstances in which water was used. But all those, with the exception of one, the church allows to be Judaical. This passage by not excepting this, by putting all upon a level, in one category, renders it plain that all the "diverse washings" that preceded Pentecost, are to be slumped, consolidated, and run into one antitype. Water was employed on different occasions under the law, but the ceremony of baptism is neither more nor less than the use of water; therefore it falls in along with the diverse washings that are commuted; therefore it belongs to those baptisms which find their terminus in a doctrine. The various ritual circumstances in which water was used, are called baptisms; on what pretence can John's baptism be exempted from the list? All the others find their focus in a *principle*; why is this one to continue on the footing of a *rite*? Paul in a particular passage makes mention of sabbaths? By so doing, he puts the seventh day into the society of other institutions—such as the seventh month, and the seventh year—which avowedly were Jewish and temporary. By classing them thus together does

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he not virtually homologate the day with the others?—Paul in this scripture, speaks of the doctrine of baptisms. In this language, he indirectly declares that washings have verged into a principle. But John's baptism is a washing, therefore it shares the fate of the rest.

Heb. IX. 10,—“Which stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.” What is the distinction between the diverse washings of this text, and the baptisms of the preceding? We do not believe that there is any. The admission is made that these washings differed among themselves, that there were formal distinctions between one and another, but it consolidates them after all into one class. In our modern theology washing is not washing. When is a washing not a washing?—When what is called a duly authorised ecclesiastic is the operator. By a chemistry peculiar to his office, he effects a transubstantiation. The combination of oxygen and hydrogen in his hands, becomes the **Holy Spirit**!—Heb. X. 22,—“Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” This text, as much as any that we can think of, presents a difficulty in the way of our view at first sight. We believe however, that it is only apparent. A parallel passage in Ezekiel half removes the mystery. “Then will I sprinkle *clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean.” The verse that immediately follows, says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.” The Old Testament then throws light upon the subject, by using the term *clean water*, and by speaking immediately afterwards of the holy spirit. The genius of the passage makes

it very plain that it is one thought, and that the two terms clean water and new heart, are nothing more than different names for the same fact. Philosophy informs us, that to apply the name clean to actual water, or indeed to any carnal or material object, would be to predicate of it what is not true. The statement could not be looked upon as absolutely correct. That which Ezekiel denominates clean water, and what Paul designates as pure water, is what Jesus names *living* water. But who is there who doubts that in the last instance the holy spirit is that which is referred to? But the terms clean and pure when scrutinized, would be as improperly applied to mere water, as the name living. But this scripture speaks of our *bodies* being washed with pure water; and this to many would appear another argument in favour of a rite. This too admits of a ready solution. One scripture invites us to present our "bodies a living sacrifice;" another uses the expression, "let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the *flesh* and *spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God;" another tells us to "hate even the *garments* spotted with the flesh;" and there are several that remind believers that their bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost.—Combining the sense of them all, the passage under discussion will be considered to refer to the *thoughts* and the *conduct*. It will speak to us of having "clean hands and a pure heart," of "fearing God and keeping his commandments;" in a word it will harmonise with the thousand texts that pourtray religion in its twofold office, of leavening the *feelings* and influencing the *actions*. Thus regarded it will give forth the idea, having our hearts estranged from evil thoughts and desires, and our outward life regulated by that spirit who is the pure, the clean, the living water. It will say in dissimilar but in equally pertinent terms, "if ye live in the spirit, walk in the spirit."

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Heb. XII. 24,—“ And to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.” Those who contend for the literal sense of the term sprinkling, when it occurs in connection with water, involve themselves by the like rule in the necessity of using *blood* in the same way. Those on the other hand who understand the sprinkling with clean water as meaning the influence of the spirit, will see their opinion corroborated by this text. I Pet. I. 2,—“ Unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The remarks made on the preceding scripture apply to this. I Pet. III. 21,—“ The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” A slight inaccuracy in the translation hinders this passage from expressing to us its full import. We desire to draw marked attention to the circumstance that the word which we render *figure*, should be read *antitype*, the expression in the Greek being *antitupon*. This change makes a very discernible difference. It forces us to think of baptism in the capacity in which we are seeking to place it, of an *antitype* or doctrine. It puts to opponents the searching question, can water form an antitype, or any part of one? It shuts us up to the necessity of looking for an object that is as much the reverse of the carnal or material, as any other antitype is allowed to be. Tit. III. 5, 6,—“ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Rev. I. 5,—“ Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” Rev. VII. 14,—“ And he said to me, These are they which came out of

great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." These three texts prove that the term to wash, can be employed in Scripture when there is no intention of speaking according to the letter. If we insist that where it is followed by the word water, we are bound over to the rite of baptism, the same principle will compel us to say that we are also under the obligation to wash ourselves and our robes in the blood that cannot be procured.

On the whole we are strong in the opinion, that the Epistles do decidedly vindicate the position which we maintain, and that they do not contain *one passage*, which compared with the context, and the rest of Scripture, affords any colour to the dogma of baptism by water. But these writings are of a catholic kind. They deal with all Christian doctrines and duties. They draw out each article to its remoter effects. They could not on any reasonable supposition be conceived to be silent on a subject which, if it is anything, is inseparably connected with salvation. They speak of it in many points of view, but never as a rite, having its method, and its day, and its place, and its official. They describe it as that whereby believers are buried together with Christ, as a fact which is one as God is one, as that which saves, as that which is a doctrine, as that which is an antitype, as that whereby our bodies are washed with *pure water*, as that which brings us in connection with the blood of sprinkling, as that which "one spirit" performs for all the true Church.—There is not one of these ideas but what blends and matches with the spiritual view, and there is not one of them but appears to rise up in opposition to the ritual system. The ceremony has no necessary oneness about it, it does not bury the believer along with Christ, it does not baptize him into the body of the Saviour, it is not the pure

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water any more than it is the living water, it does not save, it is not a doctrine, it is not an antitype. Nor yet will it bear to be called a *seal*, a name which is often given to it, and which seems very foolish when examined. Such a rite as circumcision might be entitled a seal, because it left a mark on the *body*; such a fact as regeneration well deserves the name, because it makes an indelible impression upon the *soul*. Baptism by water does neither one nor the other. A man might receive it a hundred times a day, and yet not be able to give either material or moral evidence that God had set his seal upon him. Mere words must have a strange effect upon those minds, that can calmly continue to regard as a Sacrament and a sealing ordinance, an act which is done for us by the skies above, and the waters beneath; an act which each person does for himself generally once at least each day he lives: an act in which the beasts and the plants participate as well as we.

This matter of water is singularly small in itself. It is indeed so petty that a man feels as if he were compromising his respectability, in making it the subject of discussion. The size of an object however may be estimated by its nearness to or its remoteness from the optic nerve. A piece of matter half an inch square, is not a large body, but it is large enough to shut out from the view the planetary system. Water or no water, much water or little water, the intrinsic importance of such questions is very minute, but they may be so used as to become of paramount moment. They may be placed in such a relation to the retina as to render it impossible for a man to see any thing besides. Such has been, such is the case. Although this be a point which a man of tolerable sense can hardly canvas without shaking his opinion of his own sanity, there is not in the round of things a subject that excites

a more engrossing interest. The questions shall we have a ceremony here, and if so, what is to be its length and breadth, are just of that order that suits the average intellect of those who twitter in the groves of theology. There is not a topic connected with religion that gives rise to more incessant skirmishing. The conflicts between the French and Arabs afford but a faint conception of this interminable petty warfare between the men of much and the men of little water. A person of sober judgment must feel that Gulliver's acquaintance in Lilliput who were arrayed into the rival factions of *big-endians* and *little-endians*, relative to the dilemma at which end an egg should be broken, were occupied with a controversy of as much real importance as this. Yet in the last two centuries probably no year has passed, that has not ushered into notice a new volume or two, on one or other side of the subject. The dispute appears to have been conducted on the principle of those wars that were carried on in the very formal periods of the military art—with vast pomp and circumstance, with many ingenious and intricate evolutions, with tactics of unquestionable complexity, but without any result. The gallant combatants seem in their admiration of strategy for its own sake, to have become quite oblivious of the fact that they were doing nothing. Like the two London gentlemen in "She stoops to conquer," they appear not to be aware that instead of going forward, they are only moving round and round old Squire Harcastle's house. They feel such unqualified delight in their own circular tactics, that if they could be made to understand such considerations as those which relate to spiritual baptism, they would feel as the old pedantic Austrian General did, when he had seen Napoleon's successes in Italy, that the art of war was spoiled. They would be indignant at being told that it was possible for theology to move in any

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other than an elliptical course. Disgusting then as the subject really is, there is no one that comes home more directly to the bosom of each churchman, and if there be one of this series of Essays that will attract more notice than any other, that will produce more than a proportionate share of critiques and replies, it will be the one which we now handle. On the system in which the question has been discussed hitherto, it looks likely as if it might be discussed for ever, without any discernible effect except that of amusing mockers. The arguments of the two parties appear to possess the qualities of the *asymptote* and *hyperbole*—concerning which geometers tell us, that if they be produced for ever they will not coincide. We cannot wonder at the decided inclination shown by the churches to hold on to this rite, and to make the most of it, for it is perhaps the most serviceable tool in the workshop of legal christianity. It is susceptible of *decoration*, and therefore it is calculated to exert a considerable influence upon that numerous class who receive all their religious impressions through the senses. To take it away is to compel the Church to have one pageaunt less, and it is by pageaunts chiefly that influence over the mass is to be kept up. It has the advantage of making the Church as broad as the population. An *eclectic* system has its evils; and carnal religionists do not care to confront them. It is likely to give offence, because it presumes to speak of mental and moral qualifications, and does not proceed upon the notion that every one who has a *body* is therefore a believer. However well adapted to make men better, it is ill fitted to play the part of a recruiting sergeant, and to augment the numbers of congregations and sects. The christianity which loves this rite, is far from finical. Like John its author, it enlists whole regions and provinces. Its terms are, are you willing to pass through

this ceremony confessing your sins? It seems to bring the gospel down to the level not only of ordinary men and women, but to the level of what in the mean time is only animal matter, for it takes in children in whom the first elements of thinking are not yet developed. To what a large amount of mere brute sentiment does it appeal!—It is pleasing to unregenerate human nature to be told that it stands in need of no repentance. It is delightful to the feelings of the natural man to be allowed to suppose, that he can reach the skies by a tower of Babel of his own erection. It is flattering to the predilections of nursing fathers and breeding mothers to be given to believe, that their progeny by right of inheritance are entitled to enter the true Church. It is putting a bounty upon mere propagation, that cannot fail to be very acceptable to human nature as we find it. It compels all parents to feel an interest in christianity, and binds them over to help the churches in the ratio of the number of their offspring. Thus it appears to league the Gospel closely with the merely brutal. It gives rise to the notion, without avowing it, that christianity is a corporeal system, that it proceeds on mechanical principles, that it is a sort of epidemic propagated by contact. It seriously hinders men from seeing it to be a mental or spiritual dispensation, and it prevents them from analysing its properties from this point of view. It has also this further recommendation in a carnal sense; that it appeals very strongly to base feelings in those who fulfil the office of teachers of religion. It endows them with a power which they get by pedigree, and which demands no mind and no character. By enduing a black robe, they suddenly find themselves the administrators of an ordinance that is conceived to be essential to eternal life. They are entitled to suppose that a salvation which can be warranted, must

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filtered through their fingers. In this quarter again it addresses itself to a vast amount of carnal and satanic propensities. To speak of doing without it is to throw a brand into the midst of this magazine of horribly combustible and offensive materials. A rite which is capable of decoration, which is intelligible to all, which appeals very loudly to the sentiments of parents, to the love of power in ecclesiastics, cannot be let go without a struggle.—When the possibility of dispensing with it is mooted, difficulties of all sorts are alledged; by what means is society to be influenced, how are congregations to be held together, how are ministers to command reverence? We freely admit that a rite cannot be removed without involving the necessity of rearing the building on a *new foundation*. But is this an evil? We acknowledge that if an outward form be the fact that invests religion and its teachers with solemnity, to abrogate it, makes it needful that another title to respect should be established. But is this to be deplored? Is superstition to be rated as a positive good; is it of bad consequence to expose human folly; is it to be regretted that men should have a pressure laid upon them to be more moral and intelligent than they have been; is it subject of sorrow that they should be induced to take the unity of the spirit instead of the chains of custom, ceremony, and politics? We fully admit, that to expunge baptism by water would force the churches to stand upon a new footing; but we see no harm in that. We do not attempt to deny, that in abandoning John's baptism, they would be driven to think of the baptism of the spirit; but we consider that that would be an improvement. We allow that if Ministers could exert no influence through this rite, there would be an additional necessity laid upon them to be men of mind and character; but we do not believe that this would be an

evil. We grant that if this rite was superseded, men would have one shelter the less behind which to skulk and to evade the religion of faith and good works; but we are decidedly of opinion that this would be an advantage.

CHAPTER X.

AGENCY.

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."—MATT. IV. 19.

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."—PHILEM. 6.

Where doubts are entertained of the possibility of effecting an object, we have reason to conclude either that it is essentially impracticable, or that it has scarcely been tried. When science was at that point at which men disputed what was the figure of the earth, and whether it moved or was stationary, there was evidence in that fact alone that few distinct observations had been made in Astronomy. When men were debating whether there existed in the Western ocean some other continent, it is plain that America could not have been explored or discovered. When air, water, earth and fire passed for four simple elements, it is obvious that they could not have been thoroughly analysed. When the subject was made matter of dispute, whether the steam of boiling water could be used as a motive power, it is self-evident that no carriages or ships had yet been driven forward by its influence. When sages were asserting that it was an impossible thing to navigate the atmosphere, we are entitled to conclude that the Balloon must have been quite in its in-

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fancy. When they maintained that steam could not be applied to the voyage across the Atlantic, we have in that circumstance a proof that the experiment could not have been made. Such discussions necessarily have place only at the origin of an undertaking; they are not found to exist when much action has been taken. In the case before us, the fact that it is considered absurd or blasphemous to affirm *that one man may convert another*, proves one of two points. either that the thing is essentially beyond the reach of human agency, or that having been so hitherto, theologians as they have been wont to do, make religion of their own wickedness and ignorance. Time *was* when it argued infidelity to say that the earth moved round the sun. Time *is* when it is considered symptomatic of the worst views to assert, that the mode of progression which the bible defines as the career of the spiritual kingdom is, that the saints should so reflect the character of God, as that by their direct influence sinners should be converted. This, as we have stated, indicates one of two facts, either that it must be wicked arrogance to make such an assertion, or that the history of true religion is yet to begin.— If the causation, the agency, ought to dwell within the true church, and if that body as yet has no perception of this truth. but on the contrary regards such an idea as foolish and profane, then nothing has been done as yet, because from the quarter from which influence should have proceeded, no action has come. On this hypothesis, what has occurred hitherto, has so far as men are concerned, fallen out by chance, and the present state of the church, which many are disposed to consider so prosperous, would amount to little more than what is the product of mere accident. On this notion, the golden age of religion would be understood to commence from the time that the true motive power should be discovered; from

the period when believers become aware of their obligation and their privilege. On this view the *past* would present the results of dark superstition, of metallic formalism, of mere empirical and fortuitous events; the *future* would be looked to as the era when liberty and agency and usefulness, and the adaptation of names to ends, were to become the average and ordinary phenomena. If scripture puts causation in the christian commonwealth, if it be through the instrumentality of the saints that it declares that the chain of events is to be unwound, then if the people to whom the agency is committed refuse to undertake it, the necessary consequence would be a total want of incident, a complete stagnation in the church. The spring that was intended to produce the motion does not work, it follows then that the mechanism will remain inert. A man may be wrong in his premises when he affirms that it is the doctrine of holy writ that all God's springs are in Zion, that all communication between heaven and earth is through the saints; but if he be correct, then the results to which we have pointed are of logical necessity. Then if all agency is rightfully within the true church, if the appointed channel by which God chooses and promises to propagate his religion be the influence of the elect; and if the community that ought to be exercising these functions is in almost total ignorance of its prerogative, then there can be little intercourse between heaven and earth. The answer which silly professors are in the habit of making to this statement, scarcely deserves to be noticed.—It is to this effect: that it becomes us not to limit the Almighty to any particular method; that it is competent to him to employ the means which seem to him the best.—Minds which can raise this figment must belong to a low class in the series of intelligence. Reason in them must be in a very rudimentary condition. They must be quite

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incapable even of a small degree of analysis. To take God at his word, is surely not to limit him. To give credence to his own descriptions of himself, is certainly not to dishonour him. To find in his record that he has ordained a specific method and to expect to meet with him along the way that he has marked out, is not to prescribe rules to Jehovah, but to submit to those which he himself has imposed. To believe God when he says that he adopts a given mode, is certainly not to declare that he could not have followed another course. To take things as he gives them out, is not a declaration on our part that they could not have been otherwise. To receive it reverently from his mouth that he pursues a definite course in this matter, is not to tell him that he could not by any possibility have taken a different method. The distinction which we draw will probably be quite imperceptible to the weak persons of whom we speak, but it will do good to those whose opinions are yet to be formed or consolidated. If God can be shewn to declare that his people are the rightful agents in extending his kingdom, to receive the principle is not to prescribe but to believe. We understand the position which those assume who deny it to be the mind of the spirit, but we do not comprehend the process of reasoning employed by those others who maintain that to hold this opinion is necessarily to coerce the most high. God may or may not lay it down in the scriptures that he effects his purposes through the medium of believers, but if he does establish this principle, it is faith and not arrogance to give it credence. The whole question then resolves itself into this: does he or does he not reveal this plan? If the result be arrived at that the bible promulgates this method, there is no room afterwards for the objection that to believe in it is to put fetters on God. If his word then gives it out that he is great in Zion, and that he chooses

to rear up a church by putting his spirit into holy men. and if in the whole previous history of the religious world there has been no clear preception of this truth, no lucid view of the results that grow out of it, it becomes easy to explain all the evils that afflict mankind. The connection between heaven and earth is interrupted; men are blind to the part which they are called upon to perform; they make religion of being imbecile and worthless; in a word there is little causation, and there can be but little result.

Forming our conclusion upon what has happened from the reformation downwards, we consider that most will allow that the opinion has nowhere prevailed in any great extent, that it lay with christians, under God, to build up the spiritual temple. There has been no lack of pretension on the part of the churches, but it has not pointed in this direction. They have been ready enough to lay claim to a divine origin, to assert that their frame-work was erected by divine revelation, to maintain that their ministers were *ex officio* ambassadors from heaven, they have been prone enough to affirm that their ordinances and their sacraments had a saving virtue. This was not easily disproved, and therefore it was the more readily claimed.— They have in few instances given out that the power of conversion resided with them, for this reason among others that it was not easy to substantiate the claim unless it was real. Every ecclesiastical body that has sprung up within these three centuries, has said directly or by implication, that it had divine authority to ordain preachers after a given model, to hold meetings, to dispense ceremonies, and to perform the various outward acts that made it what it was. There was small risk in claiming a heavenly pedigree by such tokens. But it has seldom happened that they have pretended to be divine in the way of visibly exercising the spiritual baptism and changing human

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hearts; this was a claim which it was easy to disallow if it was put forward falsely. In general they have been so far from advancing this claim, that they would have agreed in calling the man a blasphemer who was so peculiar as to alledge that the power ought to reside in the Church. What a strange position! To affect to be divine where nothing spiritual could dwell; in buildings, in vestments, in modes, in days, in water, in bread, in wine; to refuse the presence of heavenly influence where it could be exerted to the glory of God and the great good of men! To our mind it seems that the case ought to be exactly *reversed*. The Church should cease to connect the Almighty with mere scaffolding. It should desist from supposing that sacred virtue can flow along the channel of mere "bodily exercise." It should be ashamed of the idea of associating the Almighty with bald ceremonies which require neither character nor intelligence from those who practice them, but which an insensate machine is able to perform. It should find its fellowship with Jehovah to consist in things great, good, mental; in things which have the evident impress of his character, and which cannot be counterfeited by any fool and hypocrite. To claim kindred with heaven because of certain matters of stone and lime, certain objects of mere upholstery, and to be earnest beyond measure in publishing the pretension, to affect no affinity where mind and virtue are intimately concerned, what poor ambition, what imbecility, what real worthlessness! It appears a fact most deserving of being enquired into, that God promised to put his spirit in the Church; it seems a point naturally insignificant and base that this body should be distinguished by uniform and manual exercise, by normal coats and regulation facings, by prescribed gesticulations, and patent leather and prunella. To find that all the eagerness has revolved round

the latter topics, and that all the indifference has been evinced in regard to the first matter, reveals a state of feeling in which godliness, if present, must be so in the minutest possible degree. We could imagine the churches to exhibit ignorance of many important subjects; we could conceive them to manifest much unseemliness of conduct, and yet on the whole to deserve esteem and veneration, because in the main they displayed a true desire to follow after real holiness. But we cannot regard them as worthy of respect, nor can we look upon them as having the spirit of God in any high extent in the midst of them, when all their greater movements are prompted by superstition, formalism, politics or ambition, and when the utmost that can be alledged of them is, that they contain here and there an individual who, having little or no share in pulling the strings, exhibits a degree of sincerity and singleness which prove that God is with *him*.

Looking at the churches in a broad and general manner, their doctrine may be designated by the two names of Arminian and Calvinistic. Strange to say, those of the first class have chiefly laid claim to agency, whilst the Calvinists have placed much of their religion in repudiating the thought. In our estimation the man who *intelligently* holds the articles of the Arminian creed, is not a convert, but is in a state of nature. Yet almost all the pretensions to agency have emanated from such. In our opinion, he who *truly* believes the doctrines of the Calvinistic creed, does so because he is born from above.—And yet men of this class, having the spirit in the sense of being saved, have almost invariably recalcitrated the notion that it was their duty to communicate to others what had been imparted to themselves. The notion of agency when cherished at all, has found favour with those *that had nothing to bestow*. They who were in posses-

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sion of divine grace, they in whom the new life resided, have thought that they displayed no better proof of piety and soundness, than by ringing changes on the idea that they could do nothing. Born into the spiritual world by an accident as it were, they deem that they evince a sense of the gift which they have received, by stating it to be impracticable *to pass it on*. In the file of worthies that Milner draws out; in that list composed of saints from the Apostles downward; in that procession consisting of men who so obviously were all sons of God, is there even one exception to our statement? Is there one distinct case of a believer who having received the gift of God, sets himself accurately to define "the way of the spirit," occupies himself in attempting to trace out some parts of the plan by which God has arranged to communicate with his Church? In the whole history of evangelical religion, no traces of this are to be found. Spiritual men are invariably heard declaiming against the very supposition of a *plan*. They are seen exulting in the idea, that in *their* province all is fortuitous, and that it is left to such carnal things as human science to proceed according to a fixed method. They are noticed repeating the oft pronounced absurdity, that to advocate a system in religion, is to attempt to tie up the hands of God. They are found rejoicing in the notion, that such topics are essentially mysterious, inscrutable, and without even having attempted the proof of this, they are heard solemnly to quote the scripture that says that "secret things belong to God." They first beg the question by assuming that this subject is one of the secret things, and then they give out that it is impious for us to canvas it. They quote without understanding it, the passage wherein the spirit in certain circumstances, is likened to the *wind*, and they seek to make out by its means, that we are bound to think of that

personage as one who is utterly lawless and capricious in his movements. By such sophisms agency is got rid of. It can easily be made to appear holy to inform mankind that you can do nothing. It does not matter that in making this statement, you are employing Scripture language in a manner that Scripture does not sanction. It signifies little that in uttering this heartless fallacy, you are shewing yourself blind to the other view of the question, which reminds the believer that he may do all things through Christ which strengtheneth him. It is of small consequence that the man who is so ready to assure others that he can do nothing where spiritual things are concerned, *very generally shews himself far from incapable where low temporal interests are at stake*; the hollow, yet pompous futility which he gives out, passes current with many for evangelical humility and true religion.—Again, the fallacy which asserts of any attempt to define the methods of the spirit that it is to limit the Almighty, can easily be so stated as to make it seem specious and holy. Hence there is no one adage that is more bandied about, by that class which we are in the habit of considering has the most of religion within its compass. Further, this coterie is exceedingly inclined to represent the kingdom of grace as a province that is as much as may be opposed to any thing *scientific*. Probably because their minds are for the most part physically averse to any thing that requires vigorous thinking; probably because no elements are congenial to them except those which are of a sentimental or rather of a sensual sort, to speak to them of fixed principles in the spiritual world is to bring before them what they do not understand, and will not tolerate. They reply to you that such things may be allowed in human science, to cultivate which argues in their estimation a mind necessarily carnal, but that they cannot be allowed

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ed in the gospel, which if it be judged of from their pro-
lusions, is free from anything like method or determinate
principles.

Further, the Bible makes mention of some things that
are secret, and others that are revealed. A sane man
would conclude that anything which is within the pages
of the Bible, belongs to this latter category, inasmuch as
it is a *revelation* from first to last. Not so this superficial
class. To them a fact which is beyond their intelligence,
or which has not yet been looked into, is one that is es-
sentially mysterious, one that belongs to the hidden things
that Scripture refers to, one therefore that it is impious to
scrutinize. Thus by insisting upon this statement about
hidden things, and by applying this term to any points
which idleness, incapacity or selfishness prevent them
from sifting, they seek to make the pace of all enquirers
as slow and uncertain as their own.

Yet again, the Bible institutes a comparison between
the spirit and the *wind*. A man of any discrimination,
would entertain the hypothesis that the analogy extends
to *some* points, but not to *all*. He would be willing to
allow the supposition that the spirit and the wind resem-
ble each other in being *invisible*, but that it is not de-
signed that the comparison should extend to all the pro-
perties of each. Incapable of this degree of discrimina-
tion, the class of which we speak attempt to hinder all in-
vestigation into the plans of the spirit, by bringing down
this metaphor, and by insisting that it is to be taken in a
sense that would represent the Holy Ghost as a being quite
lawless, and one who pursues ways that are morally insus-
ceptible of being looked into. We may not have suc-
ceeded in giving a lucid statement of the evil that we de-
precate; but of this we feel very sure that it prevails in
all the extent which we have described, that there is not

in existence a work which attempts to lay off the particulars of the processes of the spirit, and that probably there is not a believer but would recoil from the proposition to regard them as matters capable of being reduced to orderly statements. At the same time while it is an evil, it is one that is fitted to convey strong consolation to the pious mind. It helps to explain a multitude of strange anomalies. It assigns a reason for the very inconsiderable extent in which religion prevails. It accounts for the fact that few really spiritual results flow from the means that are employed. If the real christian, as compared with mere professors and unbelievers, be as one to the thousand, this view throws light upon the subject: for it says, how can it be otherwise so long as agency is disclaimed—how can there be results when *causation* is wanting? Thus a man is enabled to look upon the church, so far as it has gone, as a mere *embryo*. He is entitled to survey the past career of the gospel, as only initiative. Instead of joining in the hue and cry of the noisy pack, instead of repeating the varied commonplaces of silly wonder, instead of regarding the past as an era in which great achievements have been performed, he calmly considers it as a period in which little more has occurred than the getting together of materials for the future edifice. Possessed of so valid an argument why the progress of events cannot have been great, he is furnished with a phylactery against the notions of that gaping class, which from trivial reasons is constantly pronouncing the end of the world to be at hand. He is willing enough to believe that the era of superstition, of ceremony, of priest-craft, of word-play, of religious politics, may be drawing towards its close; but so far from viewing this as the conclusion of time, he regards it as the proper beginning of the true career of the gospel. With this opinion to guide him, he does not need to have re-

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course to the weak expedient of supposing that Christ must come *in person* before things can assume a better aspect. He pronounces this idea a libel on the holy spirit who is with the churches. He holds it to be wanting in philosophy to bring in a new dispensation, when there is not the slightest reason to conclude that the energies of that under which we live are developed. He maintains that so long as only a minute portion of the bible is understood, so long as the very idea of causation is repudiated, there is no necessity to bring in another economy. He considers that to break up the fallow-ground of the bible, to bring into a state of tillage the enormous tracts that at present lie waste, to find meanings for the immense portions that as yet are mere type; he thinks that to induce the churches to apply for those spiritual energies that are promised to them, to lay hold upon those gifts of prophecy, of teaching, of casting out devils, of converting souls, that are made over to them, and of which no traces are as yet apparent, he deems that to bring about these effects would be for Christ to come indeed, would be to evolve from the dispensation under which we live, what would virtually render it a new era.

In opposition to the lean and heartless sophisms that are circulated on this topic, we make bold to express it as our opinion, that the doctrine to which Scripture would point is to this effect, that christianity relies for its propagation on the doings of believers, who consciously and systematically adapting means to ends, bring about results on the very same principles of causation, that have place in other departments. In contradiction to this statement, religionists will refer you to those scriptures that affirm that means may be used, but that it lies with God to grant the result. This is another bug-bear which superstition has conjured up, and which has not the existence that is

assigned to it. In every section of creation, results are in the hands of God. He can when he pleases so make things to fall out, as that means may be exerted and yet the end contemplated may not ensue. To suppose the contrary is to interfere with his prerogative. *But why should this remark be confined to the kingdom of grace?* What grounds are there in Scripture, or in the philosophy of things, for making a distinction? When the Most High does not intend that men in their common affairs should attain the result which they desire, he effects his purpose either by hiding from their view the necessary agency, or by causing some unforeseen impediment to interfere between the means and the end. *Does he do more than this within the domain of the Church?* We are quite willing to grant that within the sphere of religion, there is an enormous expenditure of means often without any spiritual consequence. But what does this prove? Does it shew that causation has no place where the things of God are at issue, or does it not rather indicate, that men influenced by sloth, ambition, or ignorance, have employed *wrong* or *carnal* means, and that from the constitution of things a spiritual result could not follow? In the transactions of ordinary life, or in the conduct of what are called the sciences, men usually feel that they are walking in a plain path, that they are dealing with fixed laws, that they can employ means with much certainty, that they can lay down a system, and that they can count upon it that neither time nor place will in general seriously affect their axioms and principles. If the same thing is not found within the province of religion, does that necessarily prove that it stands on a different footing, and that its phenomena are without rule or cause? We consider that we are not reduced to accept this conclusion. It may be that this is the explanation; in these other things men give forth all

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the energy and perseverance of which they are capable, they are determined to reach the desired result, they will venture health, wealth, ease and good name, they will add the night to the day, they will persist in this course during a long term of years, rather than fail in their object. Perhaps it is because of such reasons, that they discover latent causes in science, and reduce things to a system. If in the department of religion they find or suppose it to be otherwise; if here it seems to them that no plan can be discovered by which a man may surely communicate a given influence, are we forced to conclude that this difficulty is in the essence of the matter, are we not able to refer it to accidents that may be explained, and that may also be removed? Surely men approach holy things with a different temper from that which they carry to these other topics. If in the one case they display eagerness, and in the other supineness; if here they labour with all their might, and there with only a minute fraction of their strength, then the different results may be referred not to an essential distinction between the subjects, but to the dissimilar instruments and feelings with which they are examined. By this mode of reasoning the disparity would be shewn to consist altogether in the *medium* through which the subjects are surveyed. Results, according to this, do not take place in the sphere of religion, because the right agency is not applied. Instead of allowing the supposition that results from the nature of things *cannot* happen, this theory maintains the doctrine, that because of the actual conduct of men they *do not* happen. It analyses the constitution of the religious world, and it says that there is no need of conjuring up a mystery, when an obvious explanation floats on the surface. It alledges that it is unnecessary to suppose that there is an essential distinction between the topics, when the different cir-

cumstances under which they are explored, is sufficient to solve the problem. If the bible in detailing the methods in which its truths are to be searched out, expressly requires singleness and sincerity—if it employs the expression the whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, and if these stipulations are not complied with, there seems no reason in the meantime to go farther, in order to explain the question. We coincide with all that religionists can say to us in regard to the absence of agency, we will credit them thoroughly if they assure us that in things spiritual they are entirely ignorant how means may be applied to the production of ends. Where we differ from them is, in believing that there is an absolute necessity why it should be so. We agree with them in thinking that it *is* so, we do not agree with them in holding that it *must ever be so*.

Our view becomes all the more likely, when it is considered that this is the mode of reasoning which men have been prone to adopt in all past time. Whenever they failed of success in any particular pursuit, they attributed this to the essential impossibility that there was of examining its nature. Rather than doubt the accuracy of their methods, they would impute their failure to the very nature of the subject. As the child thinks that it was the wicked door that hurt its pretty head, and so removes the blame from itself, so full grown men when they do not succeed in any department of inquiry, are more disposed to bring in a mystery, than to accuse themselves of a lack of singleness and zeal. The boundary of their vision becomes to them the limit to the possible. When it can be alledged in regard to those who take the ostensible lead in the visible Church, that ninety-nine out of every hundred have not the spirit in any measure, and that the hundredth man possesses the gift in so slight a degree that

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it is barely possible to know him from the others, it is not at all necessary to bring in a gaunt mystery, in order to account for the want of results. The explanation obtrudes itself upon the notice. It is not that there is an abstract impossibility of effecting the object ; but it is that no agency worth the mentioning is exerted. If in the present constitution of the churches, conversions were matters of every-day occurrence, we would find it much more difficult to reconcile that fact with any principle of philosophy, than to explain the actual absence of such fruits.—We would find it hard to account for it, because we would look upon it as an effect coming into existence *without a cause*. On the theory then which we advance, it appears to us that no difficulties obstruct the path. It does not require that there should be any appeal to the mysterious, or that any forced distinction should be drawn between one section and another of the works of God. It simply avers that God is great within his sanctuary, that all his springs are in Zion, that his instruments are in the spiritual Church, that putting his spirit in men selected by his sovereign grace, he makes their sayings and doings the tools whereby his house is built up. And when the objection is raised that the agents are numerous, and that the results to which we point do not follow, this view, noways embarrassed, replies, “judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment;” it cites the text, “not by power nor by might, but by my spirit saith the Lord,” it says that the question is not one of mere *quantity*, but more particularly of *quality*, it asks what may be the proportion of spiritual men among those who give themselves out as teachers of the truth, and what may be the degree or character of their faith ; and it roundly enquires, what eminent effects can be expected from the services of those, who going forth ostensibly to do battle

against a spirit of fearful subtlety and power, have so dim a notion of the controversy, as to deny to a man that there is any appreciable connection between means and results?

At this point, it may be further demanded in what sense the religious life may be represented as an honourable or a pleasant career, if the view be conceded, which gives the saint no conscious share in the propagation of the faith? To the eye of calm reason that course seems far from enviable, which summons you to run uncertainly, to beat the air, and to walk hoodwinked through life. It would require a more than ordinary exhibition of proof to persuade a thinking mind, that this is indeed the fate to which the ruler of men condemns his faithful servants.—At the first glance of the subject, it would appear much more likely that this is the foolish idea that weak and treacherous theologians have attempted to extract from the scriptures. In all ordinary pursuits, a man proceeds with comfort and decision, in proportion as he has cause to conclude that he can accomplish his object. To send him forth with the assurance that all is indefinite, and that he may put forth every energy of his being without effecting his purpose; to tell him that there is no ascertainable relation between causes and effects, and that he is as likely to fail when doing his utmost as when acting most remissly, is the same thing as to bid him give up his labour.—And yet such is the aspect in which those present the question, who object to the idea of conscious agency on the part of the believer. We feel certain that a man of much intelligence could not content himself with this representation of matters. He would regard it as a summons to him either to reject the gospel, or to construct a new theory. It is only that order of mind that exists in perpetual haze, that could endure to live on in such an atmosphere. We are disposed to think that a dogma such

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as this, must have had some effect in deterring men of high intelligence from the examination of evangelical religion, and must have done much to throw it into the possession of a coterie composed of persons of the most limited ideas. It seems to us that none but such could tolerate the horrid uncertainty and the killing hopelessness of the dogma. Men of any tolerable reach of understanding would have reduced the subject to the following dilemma; either God has determined to save the Church *through* human agents or *without* them. If the former alternative be that which Scripture warrants, let us apply ourselves in the most deliberate manner to find out and to marshal all those circumstances and conditions on which the case depends. Let us do so on the notion, that if God has commanded the saints to go forth and baptize all nations into his name, he has, to a moral certainty, detailed the methods by which the commission is to be fulfilled. If the latter alternative appeared to be that which was agreeable to the bible, analysts of discrimination would have concluded, that such a scheme of fatalism could not be from heaven, and would have felt themselves called upon to reject the whole system. They would have come to one or other conclusion, and they could not have continued for any length of time to hover between the two regions. In our estimation to introduce *any* doubt into the subject, is to prevent religion from becoming much more than a barren list of names, or a catalogue of empty forms. It is right enough in any topic that a man should be subject to the amount of uncertainty inferred in not knowing from time to time whether he is employing the right method. This much of dubiety sharpens intellect, and brings patience into exercise. But for a man to be launched into a pursuit, to be told that its phenomena depend upon no fixed laws, to be informed

that causation absolutely weak, may, within its compass, produce large results, and that agency really powerful, may effect only the most trivial consequences, is, if he possesses fair intelligence, to fill him with disgust. With such a theory before them, only those minds that are of a vegetable character, that never contemplate a result, that are quite satisfied with rotatory movement, to whom oscillation on their own axis seems as good as any other motion, only such could be proof against the ennui, and the absence of fruits. The nursery rhyme relates,

"That the King of France and the King of Spain,
Went up the hill and then came down again ;"

to imitate their example in theology, to pursue a course of action that has no distinct reference to a special object, is to do what requires a weak head and probably also a divided heart. Religionists take a poor method of recommending the gospel to men of common sense, when they tell them that the principle which holds good in the other departments of creation, fails in this section, and when they apprise them that there is no rule to render one line of action more productive of success than another.— This is to invite them, not to give credence to a fact essentially mysterious, but to one palpably absurd. It is virtually to summon them to dedicate life, health, strength, wealth, talents, ease, and good name, to the cause of religion, and to make it doubtful whether all this agency is to effect any object. We proceed to advance some considerations that will tend to prove that the gospel is based upon a distinct plan of cause and effect, or that will help to shew on what conditions causation is suspended, or that will exhibit the results that might be expected from the general adoption of the idea.

1. The deposition of the different writers of the New Testament seems to be given to the fact, that after the canon was completed, times of peculiar difficulty awaited

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the Church. We consider that this is a topic that hitherto has attracted little notice. It has been so much kept out of sight that probably the prevailing opinion in each past age has been, that the gospel immediately after the death of its founder, *entered upon a luminous period*.—Much depends upon the alternative on which we decide. The Lord Jesus in more than one of his discourses, comments upon the thought. More especially he appears to enlarge upon it, in that long reply which he gives to the question of the disciples, on the occasion that they asked him when shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming? It is a circumstance patent to the observation of all readers of the bible, that the narrative of events which he gives in answer to the question, consists of gloomy details. These embrace such particulars as the following—wars, rumours of wars, treachery, persecution, defections, famines, plagues, pestilences, earthquakes, signs in heaven, false prophets, false Christs. The description is long and circumstantial, and the incidents which it includes are very numerous. The coming of the Son of Man is not to take place until after this chain is unwound. When he does come, the question is put, shall he find faith upon the earth?

If this long prophecy, as has been often supposed, was fulfilled in all its parts at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, it has no bearing upon our present argument. But this idea is now very generally abandoned. Connecting it with many passages of a similar texture, both in Old and New Testament, it seems designed to point forward to a series of events, the last of which is probably unfulfilled even now. This opinion receives confirmation from statements that occur in several of the Epistles. As if to attract more especial notice to the great fact, each of their writers goes over the same ground. Thus Paul in

one of his Epistles to the Thessalonians, occupies much space in depicting the features of an allegorical personage, whom he designates *the man of sin*. He is to spring up in the visible Church, he is to perform deeds of enormous turpitude and mighty import, and apparently, luminous times are not to shew themselves until he is taken out of the way. The same Apostle in one of his letters to Timothy, draws out what seems to be the same subject, into even longer detail. He fills up the sketch, he enumerates the several links of the chain. He warns his disciple to be prepared for the perilous times that are about to occur, he states in many particulars what are to be the characteristics of the era, that "men shall be lovers of their own-selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof; from such turn away, for of this sort are they which creep into houses and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with diverse lusts, ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith, but they shall proceed no further, for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was." The object of this passage is to describe not a luminous but a dark epoch, all its circumstances are of one character, they all appertain to a bad era; and it would seem that this period was to last until the truth should shine out so evidently, as to make as obvious a distinction between these impostors and true religion, as was formerly made between Moses and the magicians Jannes and Jambres. Those who are

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conversant with the features of the religious world, will scarcely give it as their verdict, that such a crisis has come about, or that this prophecy is fulfilled. The opinion that is currently expressed on this subject is, that the truth is not yet openly manifested, and that the line of difference between the christian and the unbeliever, is not yet plainly perceptible. The Apostle Peter has a long passage of a similar tenour; it is rendered more emphatic by the circumstance, that Jude repeats it in his Epistle, almost in the same words. These two Apostles like Paul, would seem to warrant the idea, that the main evil apprehended and described was to consist in a counterfeit something that was to simulate true religion. They use various expressions that unquestionably imply this much, "woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear; clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever."—The Apostle John may be regarded as carrying on the thought when he speaks of Antichrist, and when he says that this personage is already in the world. He may be looked upon as enlarging on this thought, through more than one half of the Apocalypse, wherein he brings forward a succession of descriptions that it is easy to reconcile with troublesome and dark times, but which would not admit of a probable solution on the notion that they are designed to depict prosperous and happy events. Our Lord, Paul in different instances, Peter and Jude, and John, in writings of various textures, agree in asserting

that the Church before it reached times of peace and joy, should pass through circumstances of much tribulation. It seems a strong and continuous chain of evidences. The argument that we would build upon it is to this effect.—Prophecy appears to state that from the death of Christ a period should elapse, in which the circumstances of the Church should be of the most sombre nature. It seems more than likely that we have not yet passed out of this period. The incidents that are detailed as those which are to occur, do not all seem to have happened. But if we are at present going through a calamitous epoch; if all Scripture commands us to believe that the features of our times, so far from being those of a very pious era, are to be the very reverse, then it is not so critical a matter to suggest emendations and changes. The word of God it would seem, assures us that we are in bad epochs of the Church's history; that things could scarcely be worse, that Satan ranges about with little check on him, that a large portion of the landscape is covered with spurious and counterfeit forms of religion. But if the character of the age be thus desperately evil, countenance is thereby afforded to the theory which proposes great and thorough alterations. In order that the good times promised may shew themselves, a metamorphosis is required. But to effect this it is evident, that weapons the opposite of those now in use, must be employed. But what can be more opposed to the notions that have prevailed than the theorem that we suggest, which proposes that religion should be raised to the rank of a scientific subject; which urges upon men the circumstance that it becomes them in the business of the gospel to look for a plan of *direct causation*; which while it presses upon them the fact, that all holy action is carried on by the Spirit working in and through his disciples, brings forward this position that he

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is no capricious being, but acts by laws which have never yet been examined, which need to be searched out, arranged and applied? If the change that we propose be radical, Scripture in advertising us of evil days that are to be got rid of, and good times that are to be entered on, sanctions a complete revolution. To peruse the description of the black era that holy writ mentions so often and so particularly, and to examine the characteristics of the better times that are to supervene, is to accustom the mind to the idea of improvements. If we have cause to think that we are in the one, and that we must pass into the other, then in order to so great an effect there must be definite causes. We suggest as one of these, that the commission should henceforward be taken as an injunction to go forth and *regenerate*; that men should be taught to consider that the Holy Ghost is in the Church; that the convert should be led to believe, that he has really no other mission than to beget spiritual children. From what we have advanced, our proposition should not be rejected simply because it speaks of sweeping changes.

2. Throughout the Scriptures there is the mention made of a *better condition*, into which the Church is to pass, after it has run through the difficulties of its earlier stages. This topic begins soon, and it is carried on from page to page. We meet with it in the Pentateuch, and from thence it flows on in a continuous stream, till we find its termination in the Apocalypse. Each writer refers to it not once but many times. In some of the prophets there are few chapters but have allusions to it. Probably it is not too much to say, that of all themes it is the one which comes up most frequently. It constitutes as it were the most common burden in the songs of the prophets.—He who is even moderately acquainted with their writings, must be familiar with this subject, it recurs so often. It

is depicted in its rise, its progress, and its fulfilment. It is drawn by a variety of hands. It is surveyed from very many points of view. But this ultimate estate of the Church is widely different from that posture of affairs that we have noticed in the foregoing head, therefore in order to bring it about, there must be strenuous causation somewhere. No doubt the formal Zoophytes who at present give laws to the churches, have a method of bringing about this golden age, which enables them to be quite *passive*. They effect their purpose by supposing a *visible corporeal advent of the Messiah*. We cannot imagine what object this can possibly serve, except to afford churchmen a dispensation from the necessity of being useful or virtuous. It is a clumsy and we think an immoral idea. It throws into disgraceful banishment the thought that Christ has said, "Lo I am with you always even to the end of the world." It quite gives the go by to the doctrine, that the Holy Ghost the Comforter is vouchsafed to the Church, down to the end of time. It lends countenance to the low and stupid notion, which conceives that God cannot accomplish great purposes, unless he employs *ocular* and *bodily* expedients. It helps out the views of that useless sentimental and heartless class, that is willing enough to see great changes effected, provided they are freed from the necessity of contributing to them; that does not care how soon there are revolutions in the Church, if they themselves are only permitted to remain idle and worthless. Horace might seem to be writing for this sept, when he advises the epic poet not to bring in a God unless some situation occurred that rendered it essential; unless some knot presented itself, which it needed a divine personage to untie. Deeming God *in the spirit* too weak an agent to introduce the better era, they are forced to suppose that God *in the body*

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must enter on the scene, and take the direction of affairs. Having scarcely an idea of the fact that God the spirit could do all the work through might, wisdom, and holiness evinced in human agents, they devise the strange scheme which allows humanity to fester on in impotency and badness, and manages its object by a *coup de theatre*, whereby Messiah comes in invested with visible functions. What they seek to effect by means of a new dispensation, might and will be accomplished at a cheaper rate, and in a Scriptural manner, by the development of the resources of that under which we live. These as yet have scarcely been tested. We know that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but this is almost the sum of our knowledge. A few first principles are laid down, and with precision and fulness, but the *practical* part of the process is yet to be entered on. There is reason to consider that the Church is still in that transition state, to which the writers of the New Testament successively advert. There is certainty to assure us, that whatever be the degree of her progress at this hour, she must necessarily arrive at a palmy condition, when she shall be without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Theologians in order to convey her from the one posture into the other, are in the habit of imagining a new economy; they bring about the change by means *in which man is supposed to have no share*.— They accomplish their end without calling into exercise any new energies on the part of believers, and therefore they introduce a new era, without adding to the morality of mankind. While humanity crosses its hands, they conceive a golden age to come down from above, *ready made*. In their plan, righteousness may look down from heaven, but no truth springs out of the earth.

The principle that we advance does not seem liable to these objections. It produces the change at a cheaper

rate; and whilst it does so, *it benefits the human race*. It does not invoke another dispensation, but it contemplates the development of the powers of that under which we dwell. It gives out that the *practical* department of true religion remains yet to be unfolded. It alledges that the career of the gospel is still to commence, so long as man has not thrown off the shackles of fatalism. It affirms that until believers find themselves in the posture of carrying out the purposes of God, not blindly, but in a conscious and systematic manner, results, *so far as men are concerned, take place by chance*. Instead of joining in the common exclamation that it is well with us, this theory would look out upon the domain of the visible church, would descry in it few enclosures or signs of cultivation, and would regard the vegetation that does exist, as the effect of birds dropping seeds as they flew across it. This dogma would take hold upon the recognised statements of the bible, that the end shall be glorious; it would affirm that there is a way toward this effect that has not yet been essayed, because the main instrument that scripture points to has not been brought into systematic operation. We consider that our view receives much countenance from all those passages that speak of good times to come, because we cannot imagine any thing more likely to produce this glorious future. It must have influence with the discerning mind, that it proposes to accomplish the end *without strange expedients*. It suggests no eccentric vagaries. It works from the old doctrines. It is a deduction or corollary from what has been long and generally admitted. It finds new energy in old tenets. It improves upon the opinion that the holy spirit resides in the believer, by maintaining that he does so not merely to save the one man, but to make him the agent to quicken others. It says, let this idea be carried forth into all the consequen-

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ces that flow from it, and from an old root you procure a new system of practice. It contemplates the splendid future that is promised to the gospel, and it says in order to reach it it is not requisite to suppose another dispensation, thereby dishonouring the spirit, and not improving mankind; develop the resources of the present economy, let the believer apprehend what follows from being born again, let him ascend to the understanding of what is contained in the thought of being a fellow-worker together with God, and thus by benefitting men, you bring about the result. It alledges that if our view of the commission only be changed, and if all who embrace the gospel perceive themselves to be commanded to baptize men *into the name* of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, there is enough of causation in this, to carry the church forward to the splendid consummation of which scripture speaks. It says, instead of baptism by water, let us have the baptism of the spirit with the consequences speculative and practical that arise out of it, and *an agency of indefinite power is obtained*. It affirms that it would be no small accession made to the energies of the gospel to put each individual christian in possession of the idea that he is bound to propagate, and that in proportion as he multiplies, he honours God, secures glory to himself, and augments his capital of faith. It declares that however splendid be the prospects held out to the church, there is enough of power to realize them, in the doctrine of Jehovah shining out upon the world, through the wisdom, strength, and goodness of his spiritual people.

3. Scripture assigns powers to the church evangelical, that amount to all for which we contend. Let it be once admitted that the order to baptize should be read in the sense that we maintain, and all the rest follows. At present it is understood to mean an injunction to use a cere-

mony, in which water is employed. Let the other signification be received, and it will be regarded as a command to *convert*. It is too soon in the day to assert that this cannot be done, if it has never been thought of. It is quite too presumptuous to declare that it is wrong to contemplate it, if the bible be express in asserting that it must be done. The sense which we attach to the commission was held by a part of the church two centuries ago; but the consequences that grow out of it do not appear to have been clearly seen. Men discarded the rite, without perceiving the vast idea contained in the doctrine. If this reading be admitted, agency of the most distinct kind follows, and by necessary consequence. Sentiment may attempt to get rid of it, formalism which exists without the spirit, may try to cloak its own deadness, and endeavour to make out that the notion is impious, but still the question remains, has the commission to do with water or spirit, is it a command to wash or to quicken? If the arguments be entertained which say, that it has reference to the higher thought, we must not quail before the consequences they involve. If the church perceives the import of the commission, and yet feels that she cannot execute it, she is not called upon to add duplicity to ignorance, by striving to explain it away. She may honourably escape from the dilemma, by avowing her deficiency, and may promise that she will look carefully into the subject. The ordinary meaning attached to the commission connects it with an *act*. Those who understand it in the ritual sense say, that it is an express command that christians should go forth and use water. Can we substitute the spiritual for the carnal sense, and then deny that there is to be causation on the part of men? It is an injunction to *baptize*, whatever sense we append to that word.—In the one case, men as agents are supposed to be com-

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manded to do an act with water; in the other, men as agents are ordered to do an act with the spirit. When this meaning is connected with the commission, the words of Christ that immediately follow, are invested with a force which they had not before, "And lo! I am with you alway even unto the end of the world."

It is almost marvellous that Penn and his followers should so long ago have come at the conclusion that conversion was the thought contained in the commission, and not have arrived at the inference that men were ordered to go out and do the conversion. If it is regeneration that is the subject matter, and if Christ tells his followers to go and deal it out, he does not enjoin them *not* to deal it out. If he orders them to go and do an act, he cannot be supposed to give them no connection with the act. If he appoints them to baptize with the spirit, it cannot be treason against God, that they should so understand his words. Let us be deliberate before we fix the meaning that we think ought to be given to the passage; when we *have* settled it, let us not skulk from it, because it shews us up, and demands of us functions which as yet we know not how to exercise. The posture of those who interpret the commission in the ordinary sense, and who think that they are carrying out its intentions when they are sprinkling or being sprinkled, is consistent, if it is not dignified or spiritual. The position of those others who read it as having to do with conversion, and yet maintain that believers have no direct influence in converting, is foolish, and like all folly has some duplicity about it. There is in it an attempt to connect themselves with high matters, and yet not to connect themselves too closely. It proceeds from a desire to get at a benefit, without incurring a risk. A thorough-going man, to whom truth is the chief object, is rejoiced to think that a magnificent view can properly

be obtained from this scripture, even if in receiving it he is forced to throw down all high thoughts of himself and the church in general. To his mind it is an injunction to go forth and regenerate mankind. But such an order brings God and his people far more nearly together than is commonly thought possible. But there is holiness and glad tidings contained in the idea. True, it brings other views along with, it says that things have been wrong hitherto, it reproaches christians with their lethargy and selfishness, it invites them to rise up and be doing. The really honest man is willing to take the encouragement and the reproach together. What though a censure be uttered against all his past ideas and actions? it is of far more consequence that a new impetus should be given to religion, than that he should think himself faultless in his doctrines and practice. The man of minute calibre will not act so candidly. That *he* should be proved wrong, that the nakedness of *his* domain should be exposed, that *he* should be forced to open out the little circle which he has so complacently shut, and admit new opinions into it, that the sages of past times to whom age has communicated so thick a coating of orthodoxy, should be declared to have been mistaken; this cannot be endured, there is no view within the round of things for whose sake he would make such sacrifices.

In our estimation the commission is not a curious fragmentary passage, that stands out from the general surface of Scripture, and is of a different texture; it is of a piece with the rest. It is of eminent importance to our argument that the last words of Jesus appear to contain an order to his followers to regenerate men; but it will add indefinitely to the force of this circumstance to shew, that it coincides with the other parts of the Bible. One of the first considerations that comes in to support this view,

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the fact that our Lord, in describing the effect that the gospel would exert, where it was received, attributes to it powers of a *preternatural* kind, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Nothing can be more *absolute* than this statement. It does not say or imply, this shall happen in connection with the preaching of the twelve, or when the commission is exercised by a duly authorized ecclesiastic, or it shall occur at the first starting of the gospel, or it shall last during a period particularly specified. It is unconditional, it is unrestricted, it demands only of those who should exercise such gifts, that they should *believe*. It is a trivial reply to so great an announcement to say, that these energies were exerted in the *early days* of the faith. This fact may rightfully be used to prove the *opposite* of that to which it is commonly applied. Instead of furnishing a reason why they should not now exist, it is far more adapted to supply an argument why they should still be in operation. The reasoning would run thus:—Our Lord, before he departs, pronounces the declaration that signs shall follow the reception of the truth. But this promise was ratified as speedily after it was uttered, as could happen. No sooner had the holy spirit, on whom it hung suspended, made his appearance, than these tokens shewed themselves. Thus the scriptures contain not only a promise, but proofs of the truth of him who made it. So the events that occurred after the day of Pentecost, come in to the aid of the argument that there should still be powers in the church, and cannot rightfully be applied to the support of the contrary principle. A statement, *having no reference to time or place*, is given forth,

that faith should evince itself by certain fruits. It was *partially* accomplished in the first ages of the gospel.— But the partial fulfilment helps the principle ; it cannot be used for its overthrow. No restriction is put upon it, it as much relates *to all time* as any position contained in the bible ; to say then that some symptoms of it have already been exhibited, is to assign a reason *why more should be expected*. According to this view, the explanation why powers are not actually present with the churches, would be simply this, *they died out*. The energy that produced them became extinct ; the strong faith from which they emanated, passed away, as we know it did. They ceased, not because of a restriction in the promise that conferred them, not on account of a change of circumstances making them unnecessary, but because Christians became “ as other men.” They came into existence because the faith of primitive believers had the texture needful to give them being ; they expired when it lost that character. It is much cheaper to place the subject in this category, than to adopt the usual solution, and to say *that we have no need of peculiar energies now*. There were effects and signs formerly, because there was decided spirituality resident in the Church ; and to alledge that results such as once occurred are no longer necessary, is to say in other words that *faith* may be dispensed with. The most natural explanation of the phenomenon is, that the spirit is not so present as to make signs possible ; and this we know to be the case, when we attend to the general features of religion, and when we weigh the import of the query, “ but when the Son of Man cometh shall he find faith upon the earth ? ” In this manner, the momentous statement of Jesus made on one of the most signal of all occasions, is invested with an amount of meaning commensurate to the case. Our Lord is represented as giving

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a deliverance for all time. He is seen as indicating what should be the influence of faith in every situation in which it should truly exist. His prediction is beheld as fulfilled in the history of primitive Christianity. The *incipient* accomplishment of the promise is construed as proving the principle, and inviting us to expect like things when like agencies shall be again in existence. In answer to the difficulty reared up, why have we not such things working among us, the reasonable reply is returned, the agency is wanting, it is in accordance with prophecy that dark and perilous times should supervene, and the actual survey of our own period proves, that it belongs to the bad era. Thus a grand announcement is kept great, it is not explained away, it is not frittered down, no gratuitous assumptions are made, no attempt is ventured on to set up two economies, one for the early Church and another for the present, no sophistical endeavour is used to represent the marvellous deplorable weakness and irreligion as tokens of great prosperity, and believers are at once censured and encouraged, censured because their faith is at a low ebb, encouraged to associate the future with brilliant hopes. We do not at all contend that this remarkable passage should be understood in *its dry letter*. It appears to us even more agreeable to its tenour, and the rest of Scripture, that it should be understood in *its spirit*. We are most willing to believe that devils are to be cast out actually though not visibly, that the speaking with different tongues is to be regarded as meaning the mastery over the heart and its emotions which believers shall exercise, that the healing of the sick refers to the still higher gift of ministering to the diseases of the mind. We in no degree insist upon a literal reading. What we stipulate for, that the passage be taken as expressing all that can be collected from the words, when they are estimated by a

broad and accurate comparison with other parts of the Bible. When this is done, who will gainsay the doctrine of direct agency as exercised by the believer? The passage having been subjected to the process of interpreting it by the general mind of the spirit, tells of vast and preternatural energies that are to follow faith. A minute fraction of its import may be considered to have been fulfilled in the events of the first times of the gospel. But religion became secular. Believers showed themselves immensely more in earnest to be the church *official*, than to be the church *moral*. The gifts and powers expired with the graces that gave them birth. Ever since, Christians have poorly explained away their high and holy prerogatives, by contending that the thing has been done, that the time is past, that the necessity has ceased. At this hour, to advocate the doctrine of this passage in any part of Christendom, would provoke no other emotions than contempt and anger. The man who advanced it, would receive no better titles than fool or impostor. And yet the language is plain. It tells of power over the kingdom of darkness, of insight into the mysteries of human nature, of enviable ability to minister to a mind diseased. Are these energies in existence? Are they not wanted? Does not the posture of mankind cry aloud for their exercise?

4. Scripture by ways and means that cannot be reduced under any one definition, appears to attribute agency to believers. When Christ summons Andrew and Peter to follow him, he promises to make them fishers of men, rather than which expression it is impossible to imagine any thing more explicit and direct. He withdraws them from one occupation, in which surely they were agents, and that in order that they might become fishers in a higher sense. In the sermon on the mount, he advances the doctrine and explains the process, where he says, "Open the doors

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your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father which is in heaven." When Christians are distinctly enjoined to perform good works for this reason among others, that these may become the cause of faith in the minds of those who are looking on, it is a strange assertion that man has no direct share in occasioning the conversion of his fellow beings. In the same discourse, believers are spoken of by two titles, each of which involves the opinion that we maintain; they are named the *salt* of the earth and the *light* of the world. If salt has no immediate power to infuse its own qualities into that on which it is sprinkled, if light does not directly spread its influence over the surface on which it is poured, then, as far as these images are concerned, it may be admitted that faith in one man can have no tendency to breed its likeness in another. If the contrary be the case; if each of these objects is an agent; if each imparts its qualities, then we contend that the comparison should be understood to mean that the Christian too should exert direct causation. In every part of the Bible teachers are enjoined to feed the flock of Christ, and in cases not a few, they are censured because they have not supplied them with food. Can a man be said to *feed* another, who does any thing short of putting truth into the heart of his hearer? Would he be commanded to do this act, if it were morally impracticable; if it was a matter to which a believer was essentially incompetent. Would there be any justice in the reprimand pronounced against those who do not effect the object? Among the objections uttered against the Pharisees, this is one, that they shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men, that they did not suffer them that are entering to go in. If faithful teachers of religion are blamed that they closed the doors of heaven against enquirers, it is to be presumed

that it must be in the power of true Christians to do something like the opposite. A man cannot be properly censured for doing an act, if he were devoid of the power to act otherwise. There is prodigious agency contained in the following Scriptures—"Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Again, "I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." And again, "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Here is agency of a high sort. So plainly is it promised to the followers of Jesus, that the Church in every age has founded claims on this passage. Although at no time able to exemplify the *graces* that involve these functions, she has pretended to the *powers*. She has been willing to deal with the question in an official although not in a spiritual manner. In that other scripture where Jesus referring to his own miracles, says to the disciples, "and greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto the Father;" he surely erects his followers into the attitude of agents. The reason which he assigns, because I go unto the Father, is one that runs parallel with all time. It expresses ideas of this sort—you shall be invested with high powers because the work of redemption is completed; because the Son has ascended up on high, because he has received gifts for men that the Lord God should dwell among them, because the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost will come down from heaven. But the cause that made powers possible to the primitive Church, is one that stands associated with every era of the gospel. The Holy

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Spirit is a *standing character*. His mission is to teach believers till the end of the world. If the fact of his descending was a good reason why christians should possess powers in the first century, it is equally valid why they should continue to enjoy them in the nineteenth. He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. In apprising his disciples that they should be furnished with power from on high, because he was about to repair to the father, Jesus seemed to confer functions that were to last until the reason that he assigned for them should end, until the economy of the kingdom of grace was altered, until the Son should cease to be with the Father as mediator, and the chain of events was unwound. It would require a clause expressly restricting this promise, to induce in us a contrary opinion. It would need a passage to affirm that these gifts were confined to a definite period, to lead us to the notion that they have no reference to our own times. The prediction stands so plainly conjoined with the coming of the spirit, that we must suppose it designed to endure throughout the mission of that personage, in the absence of distinct assertions to the contrary. Inform us that the spirit came to the early church only, and that we have no connection with him, and we will see a cause why powers should be confined to the first ages of the faith. Allow us to believe that the spirit will exercise his functions until the cope-stone is put on with shoutings, until the last saint is joined to the Redeemer, and we will consider that gifts should shew themselves along each period of his influence.

The 127th and 128th Psalms, when the natural idea is translated into its spiritual counterpart, support the view for which we contend. They are in the list of the songs of *degrees*. They give forth the thought, that the believer, when he shall have reached the eighth and ninth sta-

ges of moral progress, shall become a *parent*. The one speaks thus, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord ; and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man, so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them : they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate." The other brings forward a similar thought, "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine by the sides of thy house ; thy children like olive plants round about thy table." Here is a procession—a graduated scale of fifteen songs. It begins at a low, it rises to a lofty point. When the journey is half completed, it is promised to the pilgrim of faith that he shall become fruitful. The blessedness of such a condition is depicted. But how poor and how equivocal do such promises shew, when taken merely in the *letter*. How restricted does their meaning then become. How will they take in the case of him that dies young, of him who never marries, of him who does not appreciate the happiness of having a numerous progeny, and of him who continues childless ? Read in a scriptural sense, how agreeable is it to reason and all scripture, that the man who in good earnest sets himself to travel along all the stages of the new life, should mid-way in his career, or somewhat later, exert a spiritualizing influence on his fellow beings ! When he has mastered the leading difficulties, when he has ceased to mourn, has cast off the yoke of self-righteousness, has had deep experience of the power of the spirit, has become wise and strong, how consonant to all we know or might imagine, that at this proud period of his progress he should stamp his likeness on society ! This is the idea to which an *a priori* view would conduct a just reasoner. On the other hand, if the church lingers round the first of these fifteen gradations, if it refuses to proceed forward, if it contains

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few members that have gone up many degrees, and probably none that have advanced as far as the point at which this promise may be realised, what wonder if it does not receive, or even understand, the blessing ? If nothing but *conduct* could lead it on to this result, and if it does not pursue this course, is it strange that it does not appreciate or believe in such unexperienced blessedness ? But if scripture speaks of a man as having children in a spiritual sense, it connects him with agency. A man cannot engender, he cannot multiply, without being directly concerned in the transaction. He might be ignorant of many who would be ready to own him for their father in the faith ; but he must have contemplated the result, he must have adapted means to ends, he must in a conscious way have lived by rule, he must have done and suffered in order to produce the effect. To engender is to be a voluntary agent.

When David uses such language as this, " Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways : and sinners shall be converted unto thee," he speaks of regeneration as that which is the result of means, that which follows from a definable mode of action, that which is so much the effect of certain conduct, that to apply the cause is to be entitled to look for the consequence. Give me thy spirit, through him I will teach, and the fruit of my teaching will be this, that sinners shall be converted unto thee. Can we suppose a case in which a more direct connection is stated as existing between means and ends ?— But the man who says, confer the spirit on me, and then I will go and bring in converts, is immediately concerned in regeneration. He is not the *first cause* in the matter, but neither is he so in any other act that he performs. It is in God that we *live, and move, and have our being*. In

the simplest thought, feeling, or action through which we pass, the power comes to us from above. To say of a man that in converting another, he is only a *second cause*, is to draw no distinction. *He never is any thing more.* In the whole circle of his moral, intellectual, or animal history, he never ascends higher. We do not dream of claiming for man the place of a *first cause* in disseminating the truth, but we affirm that to admit him to the position of a *second cause*, is to leave him in the situation of a conscious and voluntary agent, since in all his other acts he is equally remote from being the first source of the event. He who says, give me a pound and then I will go and purchase myself a hat, speaks as a conscious agent. He does not alledge that the spring of the future action is within himself; but he declares that if certain things be conceded to him, he will become competent to do that in which he will act upon system and effect a result. He who says to the Most High, grant me thy spirit and then I will teach, and sinners *shall* be converted, speaks to the same purpose. He does not declare that he can regenerate men of himself, but he makes this statement, that if God confer the spirit, the power bestowed on himself will become effectual for the conversion of others. To ask for grace in order that by its means men may be quickened, is to be a conscious agent. It is knowingly to devise a plan. It is to contemplate results. *It is to have as close a connection with an effect, as ever happens in any one of all our doings.*

A similar principle may be collected from those many scriptures, wherein David enlarges on the blessedness of him who considereth the *poor*, of him who hath distributed, who hath given to the poor: Light is thrown upon these thoughts, in the parable of the sheep and the goats. In that composition, Christ extols and rewards the saints, be-

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cause when he was hungry, they fed him, when he was naked, they had clothed him, when he was sick they had visited him, when he was in prison they had come unto him. Translating these ideas into their spiritual counterparts, as the nature of a *parable* requires, we have the same thought as that which we refer to in the Psalms. In either instance those are lauded who minister to *moral* wants. The man whom David commends, distributes and gives to the poor; he so divides the word of truth, that the hungry are fed. The men whom Christ eulogises, have given the bread of life to those that were in want of food, have put clothing upon those who were conscious of their nakedness, have supplied healing medicine to those that were sick and ready to die, have assisted prisoners to come out from that state of confinement in which each man is shut up, who is under the legal influence. But to perform acts of this kind, is to be a conscious and contriving agent. In the prophecies of Daniel, there is this passage, "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." When one man turns the mind of another to a definite object, he is in a state of consciousness, he is adapting means to ends. If this be not the case in the present instance, there is no room for the offer of a reward. On what principle of common sense can Scripture propose a recompense of ineffable worth, to those who have no direct concern in the work for which they are rewarded? It must be practicable for one man to turn another to righteousness, otherwise the Bible would not enjoin the doing of it. He who performs the act, must be a conscious agent, otherwise he is no fit subject of recompense. When the Eunuch in reply to the question of Philip, "understandest thou what thou readest?" said, "how can I, except some man should

guide me?"—he bore testimony to the doctrine which we advocate—he shewed the need of the agency of the believer. Paul illustrates the subject when in writing to one of the churches he declares, that he longs that he were with them that he may "*impart*" unto them "some spiritual gift." He lays the matter off into its several parts in the following passage,—“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” He renders the topic very plain when he says to the Galatians, “This only would I learn of you, received ye the spirit by the work of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”—and again, “He therefore that ministereth to you the spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Peter appears to speak most emphatically in our favour, where he says—“Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another *as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.*” And Paul seems to indicate the very line along which agency ought to flow, the very rationale of the process, in that verse which we have already cited—“That the *communication* of thy faith may become effectual *by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*” The Apostles in different instances, speak to the members of the churches to which they address their epistles, as those who had received grace from their lips. Paul says of some of his hearers, that he had begotten them; John repeatedly names those to whom he writes, his children, and his little children —

To be able to employ such terms, is to have acted upon a system, to have aimed at a spiritual result, and to have accomplished it. Paul in addressing Timothy, speaks to this effect, "take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Before he could use this language, the Apostle must have known that there was an *essential* connection between a specific course of conduct, and the result to which he points. If Timothy, instigated by this admonition, adopted the course recommended, and doing so effected the object, saved souls, could there be a clearer case of a voluntary adaptation of means to ends?

The difficulty in dealing with this question on a Scriptural footing, seems to us to be, that whilst it is brought forward in passages quite too numerous for citation, it is *implied in all*. The philosophy of the bible appears to be, that God puts his spirit in men, in order that they being themselves saved, may along the career of a life dictated by heavenly principles, convert others. The introduction of the Godhead in the person of Christ into a human body, tells of the necessity of the truth approaching mankind, along the line of a nature parallel to their own. The inhabitation of the spirit in the bodies of believers, points in the same direction, for it says if such be the tabernacle of the divine being who produces the agency, does he not accomplish the work by shining through the words and deeds of those in whom he dwells? The statement, "we have this treasure in earthen vessels," when carried out to its legitimate results, seems to bear in its bosom the thought, not merely that those who possess the treasure benefit by its influence, but that the others who eventually receive the truth, get it by communication with those who had it before. We adduce one other scripture,

which unless we greatly mistake, confirms this view —
 " Wherefore he saith when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The passage in the Old Testament, on which this statement is based, records that Christ having ascended up on high, procured gifts for men, *that the Lord God might dwell among them.* This text of the New Testament, while it cites the other, does not in so many words repeat this last clause. But it does what is most usual when the Old Testament is quoted in the New, it gives the same idea in other words. In the version of the New Testament, the Lord God is represented as dwelling among men in the person of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. What is this but to affirm, that the two thoughts are equivalent, and that God imparts his character to men through the agency of these personages, taking pastors and teachers to mean all who in any station work out spiritual results? In the one case, Christ ascends in order that the Lord God might dwell with men; in the other instance, he ascends in order that certain characters who are named might exercise their functions. When the one statement gives itself out as a repetition of the other, how direct does the conclusion appear, that evangelists, pastors, and teachers of the true race, have God in them, and that their spiritual doings are prompted by the divinity within? But when God acts by men in converting the human family, are these

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men to be denied connection with the result? The expression "fellow workers together with God," will conduct to the same conclusion. Those to whom it applies, are not ciphers, otherwise they could not be said to work; they are not passive and involuntary in their agency, otherwise the term could not be used as an honourable distinction. The words intimate that they are active and conscious agents, who not only act by method, but do so in such a sense as to give them a distinguished place among their fellow beings.

5. The view that we advocate receives support from *the reason of the thing*. From this we derive arguments such as the following. To say that agency is *not* exerted through holy men, is to leave us without any *apparent* channel by which God communicates with our race, whereas to maintain the opposite proposition is to exhibit such a channel. They who take the negative side, deprive us of a probable means without supplying another. They take away what seems a likely method of effecting the object, and give us nothing in its place. To alledge, as they do, that *it is the spirit who converts*, is, if they had penetration enough to see it, to afford no explanation, because we can take no cognisance of the action of an invisible being, unless he manifest himself to us through that which is visible. To inform us that it is the spirit that quickens, without adding anything more, is to enunciate a proposition which a man may believe, but with which *practically* he has no concern. On the contrary, to put it thus—the spirit converts, but he does so by manifesting his qualities through pious mortals, is to place the subject in such an aspect as to interest, instruct, and benefit mankind. Simply to affirm that the spirit regenerates, is to advance a truth, with which, until it comes to his own door, a man has no more connection than with this other, that there are volcanic

mountains in the moon. To express it thus—that the spirit regenerates, but that in effecting his end he avails himself of human agents, is to bring it into a form in which it is fitted to appeal strongly to the feelings of all who value truth.

Besides, when the weak persons who take this stand give forth their statement, that it is the spirit who sanctifies, *they contradict no one*, they beat the empty air, they fight with nothing but their own fantasies. Those for whom they feel such alarm, hold the same doctrine. They too are willing to utter the same language. The only difference is that *these last believe something more*. They put their opinion into an intelligible shape. They have a view not only of the spirit, *but of his usual mode of action*. To know more than these others is not necessarily to be unsound and profane. To find in Revelation a description of the method which the spirit pursues, and to credit it, is not to deny his being, or to sully his character.—Strange that those who tell us that the spirit quickens, should be so offended at any investigation as to *how* he quickens! Strange that they should think the two propositions incompatible, that the spirit is the fountain head of the good work, and that Christians are the channels through which *he chooses* to reach his object! Strange that they should be so confined in their ideas, as to consider the two positions the necessary antagonists of one another! And very strange that they should reason so badly, as to deem that to embrace the account which the spirit gives of his own system, is equivalent to an attempt to coerce and nail him down!

Reason further alledges, that it is admitted by all, that there is *some* connection, however slight, between the faith of good men and the conversion of sinners, and that cases have been known in all ages wherein the presence of the

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one element has had some share in producing the other. But if this much is generally allowed, all for which we contend might come by degrees. If the minute amount of piety by which the believer is distinguished from the world, is sufficient to bring about the result that *some* connection is admitted to exist between it and the salvation of others, the relation between the cause and the effect might be rendered more obvious and general, by augmenting the strength of the cause. It is not denied on any side that faith *might* be more vigorous than it is. No one regards it as an impious idea to believe that it might be indefinitely increased. Perhaps the whole difficulty lies here. Probably a change in the quality of piety would realise all for which we argue. Faith so weak as to be almost imperceptible, has it is confessed, *something* to do with the awakenings that occasionally happen. Let its quality be improved in a high degree, and then it might become apparent that it is the father of such results.

Reason would propose the question, if the gospel does not depend for its advancement on the sermons, writings, words, and deeds, of those that really love it, what *are* its springs and wheels? It is no answer to say, that the Spirit is the source of its vitality. That is conceded. The point at issue is, *how does he act?* from whence does he come? Those who take our view can return some reply to this difficulty, for they can aver that he comes in true words, in holy deeds, in those facts that constitute the life of the peculiar people. Those who discard this doctrine, have nothing to substitute in its stead, unless it be rolling eyes, and strong ejaculations, and sighs, and the other very unconvincing matters that compose the rhetoric of sentimental persons who cannot argue.

Reason would remark, that to disallow the sort of agency on which we insist, is virtually to set up the dogma of

continual ILLAPSE. But this does not appear to be the method of the scriptures. They speak of "the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." They state that the effect of the ascension of Christ on men, was to be "that the Lord God should *dwell* among them." The doctrine of *illapse* does not look upon the spirit as an inhabitant of the earth, it contemplates him as a personage who in a certain fitful and irregular manner, is perpetually descending. It thus brings down very low the phenomena of the day of Pentecost, introduces a vague capricious mode of action into the churches, and attaches a very weak meaning to the promises of Christ, "I will send the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost," and the other, "lo! I *am* with you alway even unto the end of the world." This view does not appear to appreciate the scriptures that represent the spirit as a permanent settler who dwells with men, and of whom it was said that he shall be *in* them. It prefers a chimerical and transient being who works *by frequent touches* , and not by *germinating within the man* . It is not a Calvinistic reality, but an Arminian vapour.

Reason further observes, that the actual history of religion would exhibit a series of causations, and that it is easy at any period that we may select, to show a connection between the symptoms that we see, and the pious men from whom they emanated. It considers that it is possible to trace out a genealogy, to display an apostolic succession, *to perceive the faith going from man to man* . It is of opinion that the actual facts of history bring out as plain a demonstration of cause and effect, as in any other case that could be named. Where several men of eminent holiness are seen existing in a period, there is a decided work exactly commensurate with the apparent cause; where the partisans of the truth are beheld to be possessed of but a moderate amount of piety, there the

results are of the same character ; where their godliness is minute or infinitesimal, there the effects are perceived to be proportionally weak and microscopic. This seeming correspondence between the character of believers and the aspect of religion, derived from the survey of history, commends itself to reason as a proof, that the thing proceeds upon those principles of causation, that prevail in the other departments of the creation of God. When the review of sixty centuries of the annals of mankind justifies the assertion, that the presence of eminent, moderate, or low faith has begotten its own likeness, producing eminent, moderate, or small effects, the event happens too frequently to be the result of accident, and the likelihood becomes exceedingly strong that there is a regular system.

Reason yet again makes the remark, that the idea so much bandied about by the fatalist school, that it is for man to use means, and for God to give or withhold a result, although true in itself, is *a distinction without a difference*. It is no more applicable to theology than to any other science. It is correct in regard to spiritual, but it is *equally* correct in regard to temporal things. The ordination of God is not *limited* to the affairs of the Church. The fall of a sparrow, is as distinct a case of a special providence as the salvation of a soul. It is we who maintain the doctrine all through ; our opponents are imbecile enough to confine God's controul to what directly concerns the kingdom of *grace*, the kingdom of *nature* they allow to shift for itself. Such good things as predestination they imagine should be reserved for religion alone, and should not be thrown away upon matters of mere animal and vegetable life. Theology according to them, deserves Calvinistic treatment, but Arminianism is good enough for the movements of planets, or the springing of flowers. We prefer the statement of the Bible, which

gives the Almighty an equal direction over all his works. We dislike multiplying distinctions, and especially when by so doing we produce a schism in the system, and array one part of nature against the other. Believing as we do, that all things are for the glory of God, and that they all are devised with a view to the redemption of the Church, we see his fixed purpose regulating the events of every thing that has a being. But the fact that God is master of his own works, does not hinder science in any of its usual walks. That he has the command over his own universe, does not prevent enquirers from examining *what are the principles by which he governs*. That he has the right to alter or vary his laws, if he is so minded, does not restrain men from asking to what extent he does so. In spite of his power to make what he will of his own, in spite of the fact that he modifies and changes his mode of action, men have found out the system on which he proceeds, in many departments of mind and matter. His *sovereignty* has been no barrier to their researches; his determinate counsel and foreknowledge have not hindered men from finding out fixed principles, and arranging these into sciences. But if predestination and absolute authority do not arrest enquiry and action in all the provinces of nature, why should they prevent them within the bounds of the economy of grace? To have undisputed power, does not necessarily imply to govern without a plan; to be *supreme* and to be *capricious*, are not essentially synonymous terms. If they are not there is no argument from the supremacy of the Most High, why his system should not be inspected, whether in theology or in any other province. If it can be shewn that he is not only sovereign but *lawless*, then we will forbear from analysing his method, because he has none. Unless this can be proved, his decrees cannot impede enquiry, but

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will rather help it, because they encourage the observer to expect a fixed plan, and they afford him a firm road when he has found it. The ideas of those whom we oppose are confused; they make sovereignty and capriciousness to mean the same, whereas they are separated by a well marked line.

Reason would further alledge, that if the Christian be not a fellow-worker together with God, his position is neither honourable, happy nor tenable. He is told to act, and yet is informed that he is not entitled to look for a result. He is enjoined to acquire wisdom by every possible means, and yet is given to understand, that all that he has learned may effect nothing. He is commanded to make every sort of sacrifice, and even to endure the crucifixion of his original nature, and then he is apprised, that after all he must not expect to save any souls. Such a view may very well suit those who have their own reasons for loving darkness rather than light; those who are naturally imbecile, and are resolved to continue so; those who are not willing to spend and to be spent, and yet desire to mask their heartlessness; those who are conscious that they have done little good, and who would rather drag in a mystery, than own the truth: a man of penetration and honesty could not brook it. He would demand very special proof from revelation that it was so, before he would close with a tenet so hostile to all experience and reason. He would argue thus, tell me to do nothing, and I can sit quiet: tell me to strain every nerve that by so doing I may effect an object, and I will leave no stone unturned; bid me cast away every weight, in order that I may reach a goal, and I will unclothe myself indeed, but do not in the same breath enjoin me to be both active and inert; do not so mock me as to command me to do all this, that nothing may come out of it. To flog the empty



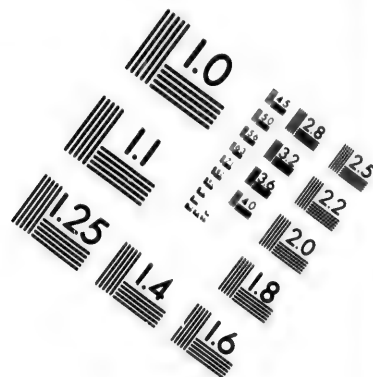
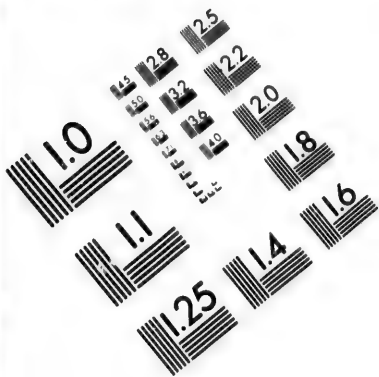
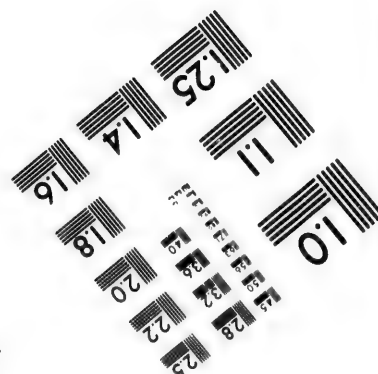
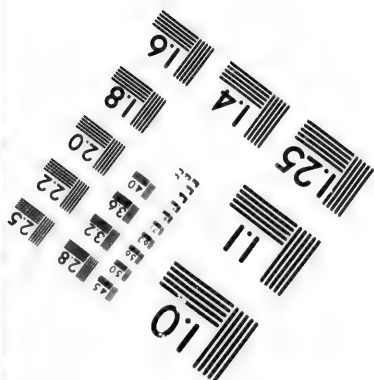
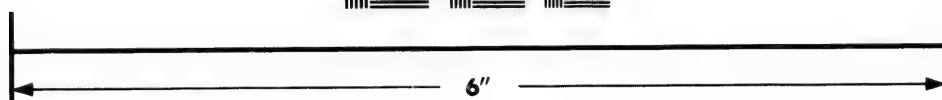
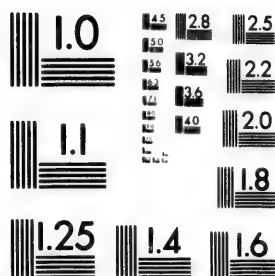


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air, to pour water into sieves, to reach at luscious fruits which eluded the grasp, to roll great rocks up slopes and to see them ever returning; these were punishments which pagans thought severe enough for their place of torment—do not propose them to me as tokens of divine preference. Let the subject be encircled by as many difficulties as the fancy could devise; let the sacrifices which it exacts be as great as could be imagined, only assure me at the last that there is *a plan*, which when found may be relied on, and the obstacles will not appal me; but tell me that there is no mode of action that will ensure a result, and you compel me to do nothing. Most thinking men would see the matter thus. Such ideas however, do not occur to the sentimental school, because they can live without an aim, and therefore are not grieved at the want of fruits.

Reason would remark once more, that agency is not *altogether* repudiated by the churches, that when it suits their purpose they put in some little claims to it, that they have a dexterous way whilst they seem to be thanking God for his mercies, of letting the world know that they had no small share in conferring the favour, and that they would make still more distinct pretensions to it, were they not afraid of it, regarding it on the whole, as a rather dangerous and expensive guest. They should take the *risk*, or decline the *honour*. It is dirty to adopt the opinion just as far as it demands nothing of them, and to leave it at the point where it would ask for something practical.—Reason would object to such equivocal doings. It would represent it to be necessary to choose one of two alternatives, either that man is the channel through which God communicates with his people, or that he is not. It would remark that to leap from the one to the other of these positions, as it suits our feelings and our interests, is not ra-

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tional and cannot be spiritual. It would aver that the effect of this fast and loose system would be, to represent religion as the only one of all the works of God that was without a plan. It would affirm that the arbitrary and capricious view that results from such premises, looks much more like the offspring of the drivelling men that we know abound in the churches, than the legitimate child of the Holy Ghost. It would alledge that there can be no science on such a notion, that so long as it lasted men would repair to other departments to exercise their intelligence, and would regard religion as the sphere of sentiment, and the small tricks that it procreates. It would state that under such a regime, there can be no manly adaptation of means to ends, that an intellectual pietist must be an impossibility under such a system, that a person of firm mind could not endure to be thus knocked from side to side like a tennis ball, that before there can be vigorous action there must be a distinct understanding on the subject, that when the premises are accurately settled, a regular science may spring up, that until then, evangelical religion must remain in the possession of that class which has monopolised it hitherto, a class which is never staggered by any of these difficulties, because analysis to it seems rather a profane thing, a class to which animal emotion is much more congenial than close thinking, a class which loves to represent intelligence and holiness as rather incompatible, probably because it suspects that its own claims to mentality might be disputed ; a class which by its vapours, whims, duplicity, and notorious want of high distinctive morality, draws down continual ridicule on the Christian profession.

6. We now approach the question, what is the *mode* by which agency is effected ; supposing man to be the conduit through which the spirit regenerates, in what state

must that conduit be in order to convey the influence?—Scripture admits that there may be many gradations of faith. It does not predicate the same things of each. It does not alledge or insinuate that each is able to propagate the truth. Still less does it allow us to suppose, that religion can be bred *by those who have it not*. That our opponents may have no plea for misunderstanding us, we expressly affirm, that it is not our idea that a man without faith can beget faith, nor yet that one who is weak in the faith, can produce anything more than weak effects. But the Bible speaks of other things than piety, nominal or feeble. It makes mention of a faith that denies itself, that follows Christ, that casts aside every weight, that takes Jesus for its example, that overcomes the world, that crucifies the flesh with the lusts thereof. It describes a faith which acts like salt, which shines as light, which is an anchor of the soul sure and steadfast, which forgetting the things that are behind presses forward toward the mark, which works by love, under whose influence a man leads a life that is hidden with Christ in God. It depicts this grace in its constitution, and in its effects. It shews it up as what it *is*, and what it *does*. We have it represented in many different points of view, and passages past reckoning relate the elements that enter into its composition, and the acts to which it prompts, in the various situations wherein a man is placed. Our statement is to the following effect: that when this quality is built up on scriptural principles; when it has attained to a goodly strength and stature, it bears children, it propagates its own likeness. Before this allegation is denied, it would be well that theologians enquired, *whether our premises are complied with*. Before they pronounce the matter to be impossible, it would become them to ask, if the quality respecting which we make this affirmation, be in exist-

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ence. They should bear in mind that we have no quarrel with them concerning things as they are. We entirely agree with them, that faith as we now find it, *does not propagate*. We are willing to go farther, and to make the admission, that as it now exists, it *cannot propagate*. Our affirmation has regard to the *future*; it has respect to a quality that as yet is only in a rudimentary state. Why should it be deemed impossible, that when fully grown, it should be able to accomplish what it cannot do as yet?

Most of the acts that men are now performing, have at some period of human history, been pronounced impracticable. The term impossible is much more frequently the measure of our ideas, than of the actual capabilities of things. We look into the Bible, and we see there portrayed a mode of thought and action, which according to the verdict of inspiration, is the influence by which God purposes to save the Church. We look from Scripture to the world, and we do not perceive these qualities in operation, or we find them only in an infinitesimal state. Noticing the discrepancy between that for which the bible stipulates, and that which man is disposed to grant, we refuse to call in a mystery to our help, and instead of this we say, *let the conditions be complied with, and the result will follow*. If they do not, it is time enough then, to have recourse to the marvellous. We can collect from many sources arguments to the effect, that the standard of doctrine and practice is not lofty. Each sect is ready to give this attestation in regard to the denominations around it. In each sect there generally is some man who is willing to say this much of his own body. It has been the same thing since the days of the Apostles. In all the long series of years from that time, the world has not seen *one solitary example of a person that has come up to the height of those models that the scripture affords*. Worse than

this, there is method in our madness—we go wrong by rule, we construct doctrines to prevent the possibility of any man shooting up tall. It is an axiom of the system in which all sects acquiesce, that we *have no right* to look for men as stately as the worthies of the bible. Most go so far as to hold that it is *impious* to entertain such a thought. To support this view, all texts that confer large promises upon the church, all passages that endow it with privileges and powers of a preternatural sort, are carefully explained away, and interpreted as having relation only to the twelve. When the King of France surrounded the tomb of the Abbe Paris with a wall, to prevent the scenes of enthusiasm and crime that took place upon it, the wits of the day turned the affair into ridicule, by the following couplet which they placarded on the wall :

*“ De part le roi defense a dieu
De faire des miracles en ce lieu.”*

The doings of the church are quite in character with what these lines alledge against the King of France. She forbids God to do business within her inclosure. She takes umbrage at the notion that men should ever be wiser and better than they are at any given moment. She makes a bed of Procrustes, and does not suffer that any should measure shorter or taller than the standard which she prescribes. She disguises the truth by pretexts that seem specious, gives out that it is evangelical humility to think thus, and the height of presumption to entertain the opposite opinion. Thus the bible becomes mediatised.—Things having the semblance of holy doctrines are reared up, to prevent it from doing good. The Spirit is enjoined with due ecclesiastical formalities, to forbear attempting any miracles on church ground. Holiness is dexterously made to consist in being dwarfish. This circumstance is full of meaning. It informs us that men are not holy, and

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that they are resolved not to become so. They must be bent on this object when they take the trouble to throw it into a *doctrinal* form. When they exert themselves to such a degree to make away with so much of scripture, when they devise so many sophisms to get rid of plain statements, when they build such high walls to exclude the light, the fair conclusion is that they must be anxious to avert the possibility of having holiness thrust upon them. The result at which we come, when things are surveyed in this direction, is, that the standard is low, that such as it is the church is contented with it, and that in a solemn doctrinal manner she forbids alteration or improvement. The tenets of the bible are not received, its precepts are not practised. This may be learned from the fact that no men like those of the bible are any where to be seen; it may also be ascertained from the circumstance that the usual method is to deny, that the high morality which it inculcates is designed to be taken in the sense that meets the eye. Rousseau, it is stated, affirmed, that a nation practising the ethics of the New Testament could not exist. But *he* was an infidel. The church says *more* than this, for it declares that it is impracticable for even a small part of a nation to subsist, following these principles. There is nothing in the history of casuistry, more indicative of littleness and unfairness, than the style of interpretation that has been applied to the precepts of the Gospel, whereby they are rendered ineffectual and pointless. Not to speak of the vast number of moral maxims scattered throughout the volume, there is enough of such statements in the sermon on the mount, to bring into operation all that we have stated concerning agency, and to impart a new character to the church. At present these engines cannot act, because they are *spiked* in the most cunning and plausible manner. Their strength is reduced

down to a degree, that any natural man can drink them off. And thus little influence is communicated by the believer, not because the bible debars him from exerting any, but because his faith is made up of such poor stuff, that it is only by *hypothesis* and in *the way of compliment*, that any one feels called upon to regard him as a child of God. If those who should be salt, are not felt to be pungent, if those who should be lights are not seen to be luminous, if those who are defined as a peculiar people, are not distinguishable from the rest of the world, it is not necessary to have recourse to a mystery, in order to explain why the truth does not spread. Even a plain man can solve the problem by saying, converts are not made, *because there is nothing to convert them*. Their fears are not aroused by beholding a class of persons who by their conduct shew them how base is their own. Their hopes are not excited by meeting those who afford them proof that there is peace and joy in believing. Their admiration is not elicited by seeing those who keep themselves unspotted from the world, and who have the seal of God evidently set upon their foreheads. They are not incited, alarmed, or encouraged by the godliness that prevails, to search the Scriptures, and to examine their own hearts. They can pursue a long career without having any one strong emotion called forth by the conduct of their neighbours, who profess religion. Frequently they can act even a better part for all practical purposes, than their believing brethren. There goes something to the making of a convert. If that something is not in existence, he cannot be made. A man will not be led to reflect *by mere hypothetical religion*,—the lurking suspicion that his neighbour *may* be pious, cannot drive him to the throne of grace.

The mind without any excessive effort of fancy, could conceive something widely different. Let the idea be

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come general and influential, that all things are possible
 with God. Let adequate notions spring up in regard to
 what it is to be a partaker of the divine nature. Let the
 opinion be currently entertained, that there are no limits
 to the height to which humanity may be lifted up, by the
 power of the spirit. If instead of slavishly bending before
 the men of the bible, turning them into so many idols
 that interfere with the worship of the Most High, and
 weakly affirming that it is never designed that our race
 should again exhibit such examples of holiness, we rea-
 soned thus—these men shot up thus high under most un-
 propitious circumstances, we should grow much taller on
 the favourable soil in which we are planted; vigorous
 piety would be the result. If in place of thinking it pre-
 sumptuous for a believer to speak of imitating the wor-
 thies of the Bible, we firmly kept up the standard, and
 maintained that it was not presumptuous for him to copy
 the Son of God himself, the fruits would be as different
 as are the two theories. If instead of slumbering in doc-
 trines and rudimentary subjects, we resolved on advancing
 up to the limits of the possible, we would become as dif-
 ferent from what we now are, as the practician is from the
 mere speculator. If in place of going along with the gos-
 pel only as far as its theory is concerned, deserting it as
 soon as it summons to action, we made a point of assert-
 ing its truths through good and through evil report, many
 sinners would be arrested in their course, who at present
 receive no check. If instead of taking the edge from
 every precept that cuts deep, we shewed ourselves so much
 the friends of truth, as to allow, admire, and practice each
 injunction, however hostile to our natural feelings, we
 would certainly be peculiar enough to compel the atten-
 tion of those, who as things now are, are permitted to pur-
 sue their own way. The distinct and unswerving imita-

tion of Jesus, which at present is prevented by weak views of doctrine, and perverted ideas of morality, would by an inevitable necessity force the regards of those who in the mean time find arguments for their own unbelief, in the conduct of the professors of religion.

What would further help out the result, each bold act done in vindication of the faith would lead to new *knowledge*, since the way to see deep into divine truth, is to survey it from points from which it has not been seen before; and new dogmas would in their turn prepare the mind for a still stronger course of action. If such mere pedants as we are, timidly revolving round a little orbit of cold abstractions, do turn some to righteousness, what might not be effected by men who carried forth into action all that they knew, and by sturdy, uncompromising practice were enabled every day to make large accessions to their stock of knowledge? If it can be shewn that at present the christian in the whole extent that there is a discernible distinction between him and the world, produces an impression by which souls are saved, is it not reasonable to think, that to render him more peculiar, would be to increase his efficiency in the same proportion? In the mean time, there does not appear to be any thing mysterious in the state of things. It is granted that few come to the light; it is also conceded that of those who do come, the most part are not able to refer their conversion to the direct agency of any particular christian. But this is not strange. It admits of an immediate explanation, from the known doctrine and conduct of the churches.—In theory they repudiate the idea that the faith of one man can issue in the salvation of another. Their practice corroborates this, and acting as if no fruits could be expected, it cannot astonish if no fruits arise. Where there is such a total absence of direct causation on the

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part of man, it is to be looked for that those who are saved should, as is commonly the case, be able to point to no human father. What we contend for, then, if it amounted to any thing, would infer a *revolution* in theology. Those who intelligently adopted the idea, would think thus, man has been passive hitherto—it remains to be seen what is to be the result of his activity. He has folded his hands, and ignorantly said, it is the spirit that is to do the work, let us enquire what is to be the effect of the doctrine—the *spirit acting through human agents*.—They would argue thus, since we believers are to be fellow-workers together with God, let us examine by what means this co-operation is to be effected. Such researches would have vast influence to open up the theory and practice of religion. Finding that a low degree of knowledge and virtue had not the effect to accomplish the contemplated object, they would not, as at present, exclaim, how very mysterious, but would endeavour, under the power of one of the holiest of all motives, to know and to do more. At present a man feels himself impelled only by the desire to save himself; he would perceive himself to be stimulated by a double influence when he felt that the salvation of others in a degree hung suspended on his conduct. As the church now stands, *he* is considered to be an eminent example who can in a faint sentimental way depone, that God has been merciful to him. In the better era which we contemplate, it would be held to be shameful for any one to name religion unless he felt himself to be making proselytes to its tenets.

Among the consequences that would inevitably follow from such inquiries and such modes of action, the mechanism of human nature would be wonderfully opened up, because it would be surveyed from a quarter from which few observations have hitherto been taken. So long as

men have been contented to think that religion comes by ceremonies, or by some unknown route, which they had no right to explore, *intellectual* persons might attempt to look into the constitution of our nature; the *pious* considered such researches foreign to their views. But what might we not anticipate from investigations that would scrutinize the mind under the guidance of the spirit of God, and in the light of that system constructed by him who "teacheth man knowledge?" A candid person would consider such things to be the very beginnings of philosophy properly so called.

One might reasonably expect *geometrical progression* along the path that we seek to indicate. When religion summoned each man to so much of *doing*, an incalculable increase of knowledge might lawfully be anticipated. It is in the very vague and passive system that is now pursued, a new idea *does* steal in upon the Church from time to time, this might be looked for constantly when the whole plan was changed, when the days of blind fate passed away, when men sought to act consciously, when they narrowly looked into causes, when they prosecuted their search after truth by that road which God has promised to bless—the road of action.

Another vast consequence would ensue. By the present method, one man only in a community is supposed to *act*, the others are regarded as *recipients*. The ideas that prevail in regard to rites and sacraments, make this to be a necessary result. *He* teaches and baptizes, and offers up a sacrifice for the rest. Others are not considered entitled to initiate thought and action. What we have written previously points out who are the true priesthood, what we now write intimates the functions that devolve on them. When men had their eyes so far opened as to perceive, that *believers* compose that line which Scripture

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ther opened to see that they are the accredited agents by
whom revelation promises to develop the scheme of events,
all thoughts of a formal priesthood would fall to the ground.
When each christian felt himself to be a son of Aaron,
and as such perceived himself summoned to a course of
high and systematic action, there would be life and move-
ment where now there is lethargy. When each believer
in the prosecution of such a course, was able to exhibit its
fruits in the converts he had made, the priest of the letter
and the pedigree could not be so bold and arrogant as now.
So soon as christians in general recognized the fact, that
whether male or female, they were all Levites ; so soon as
they saw that the commission to baptize was addressed to
them ; so soon as it became evident that they were execu-
ting the command, and turning men to righteousness ; the
doctrine of a fleshly order would receive a heavy shock.
For men would not always persist in preferring the class
that was inane, to that which was real ; the class that did
nothing to that other which shewed forth the mighty power
of God.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness: but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."—I COR. V. 7, 8.

"The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

ROM. XIV. 17,

This is a formidable subject. To advance the views which we hold, is to throw down the gauntlet to the whole church as it now stands, and to twelve, fifteen, or eighteen centuries of past history. The most of mankind would not allow the question even to be discussed. It is to say a great deal in regard to any topic, to alledge that men in general would not be convinced by any arguments however cogent. It is to say a great deal more to affirm, that it is a subject that they do not consider amenable to reason, and in reference to which they would not tolerate argument. The past with all its ominous associations crowds down upon the sentiments; and who are those that will venture to analyse what seems hallowed by time, by many and by great names? The present brings up more than enough to overwhelm most minds, because the church with united voice proclaims the communion as we now celebrate it, to be awful, mysterious, and intimately connected with salvation. In advancing our opinions we have to contemplate not merely that men will be hard to convince, but that they will not suffer the question to be brought near their mind. Without taking into account the influence of antiquity, the power of things as they

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are, is tremendous enough. All men, good and bad, intelligent and foolish, consent in admitting the sacredness of the ceremony, it is enveloped by a cloud of gorgeous and imposing practices ; the man who might have reason enough to perceive the force of the arguments that would deprive him of his rite, would probably not have the courage to surmount feelings that he has collected together from a thousand different sources. Some one asks the question, who can refute a *sneer*, we propose this other, who can argue with a *sentiment* ? Any person who has reached the age of thirty, has had his feelings so often and so powerfully aroused in this matter, that he would require a clear head, a single heart, and a bold nature, to think even of entertaining any reasonings directed against his former ideas. Few who have attained that period of life, will be induced to consider the question. Those who will embrace our views, are a rising generation who have not been subjected to the strong galvanism that has shaken the nerves, and obstructed the faculties of their parents and ancestors. Where the subtle virus of sentiment has entered, and done its work, it is barely possible that vigorous and healthy thought should spring up. The men who have imbibed the sentiments that are excited when Popery distributes the sacred wafer, who have smelt the incense of what is called the Sanctuary, and have drunk in the music of singing men and singing women ; they will not forsake this specious sensual work for such cold things as arguments. Those others who have been catechised, and confirmed, and finessed into Episcopacy, who have felt the logic of waving robes and deep sepulchral sounds, who have knelt before altars and rejoiced in the convincing eloquence of attitudes, these would not quit their moving melodrame, for what would seem to them a mere abstraction. And probably still less might

that class be expected to change its notions, that has pleased itself with the idea that all is plain, doctrinal, and reasonable within its compass. The men of this section are perhaps of all others the most wedded to their own ways. They lay much stress on the fact, that there is no parade or splendour in their liturgy, that they have shaved away all unnecessary ceremony, that they repudiate the idea that salvation is connected with the ordinance, that they observe it simply as a *commemorative* rite. These have made it bare, only to cling to it with a grimmer tenacity. Their attachment to their meagre ritual, is like the fondness that the natives of barren regions exhibit for their own country, very irrational it may be, but all the more intense.

That we may arrive the more rapidly at the heart of the matter, we design to pass by all extraneous topics.—We in no degree concern ourselves with the *history* of the question. We regard as irrelevant and unimportant, the points, whether the early Christians practised the observance, when they began to do so, and what were the modes and seasons in which they solemnized it. Equally inconsequential and idle do we consider all matters, relating to the ideas that have been entertained in regard to it, from the primitive ages downward. These may appear interesting to the antiquarian—to us they seem quite trivial. We refuse in any degree to look at the question through the glass of *tradition*. We are decidedly of opinion, that to interpose *it* between our vision and any topic of theology, is to bring in an element that is almost sure to mislead. We do not believe that past ages were wiser than the present. We deny to any former period, the prescriptive right to dictate to posterity. The data on which the early Church and succeeding generations based their doctrines, *are before us*. The materials on which they

built their systems, are in our possession. The question is not, what did men think ten or nineteen centuries ago; but it is this—having in our hands the very same Scriptures from which all preceding ages profess to have derived their conclusions, what aspect do they present to us, what are the opinions that we for ourselves are entitled to draw from them?

The literary history of the question would fill many volumes, and might occupy hundreds of those men who incapable of thinking for themselves, are under the strong fascination of the idol of antiquity. The practical and valuable features of the subject, might be discussed in a few pages, seeing that they entirely depend upon the view to be taken of four or five scriptures, of no great length. We commence with considerations of a somewhat general nature, and advance gradually up to the central facts of the subject.

First. It does not *look like* a New Testament thought or practice. It wears the aspect of Judaism. A mind rightly constituted could not draw a line of distinction between it, and those ceremonies that were in use under the law. We do not mean to deny but that an *express command* might shut us up to the necessity of observing it, but what we would intimate is, that it does not seem congenial to the other parts of the Gospel system, and that nothing short of peremptory injunction is sufficient to secure for it a place. Most men who are in the habit of reasoning, have entertained this feeling in a greater or less degree, and have only parted with the idea at the instigation of the belief, that there was no room to doubt of the command. We respect this mode of looking at the subject, and we shall not consider that our view is deserving of attention, unless it succeeds in proving that a rite is *not commanded*. There is no clear intellect which,

has felt an interest in Christianity, but has perceived itself frequently pressed by the suspicion, that the rite was not in character with the rest of the economy. Minds of this texture have very properly sought to put down their doubts, when it has appeared to them that there was an explicit order. Such thoughts as the following have flashed upon them : where is the essential difference between this rite and those other things that are admitted to have ceased ; why should we name these types and shadows, and deal with this as if it were an antitype and a reality ; where is the distinction between this ceremony and the Passover, unless it be that this seems to be only a fragment or section of the other ; why should the part be regarded as greater than the whole ; if in partaking of this rite we do not receive the actual body and blood, does it give us any nearer communion with the Messiah than we would have without it ? All such hypotheses must go down before a plain command ; but in the absence of this, they amount to a good deal. When they are the sentiments of thoughtful and spiritual men, they are conclusions derived from a very wide surface, by minds accustomed to the style and manner of the Holy Ghost. We rate them as nothing, or less than nothing, in the vicinity of a distinct order ; we estimate them as of considerable weight when there is cause to doubt that there is a command. Christian men have the feelings to which we refer ; whilst there are many doctrines and practices upon which they enter with all their heart, this is one which they comply with, simply because they conceive that they have no choice.—When they entertain warmer thoughts of it, we suspect that they have invariably tampered with first impressions, and have by much effort acquired an artificial taste. They may scarcely be conscious of this, but we believe that it is not the less the case. Few sober thinkers would acqui-

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esce in this rite from an *a priori* view of the gospel : few if left to the promptings of spiritual inclination, would regard it as in keeping with the other features ; most practice it at the word of command. They feel in other instances, that the points which they are enjoined to believe and act upon, have a direct tendency to elevate the mind and to improve the heart. They *hope* that it may be some reference to this rite, but they do not see that it is so.— Were they to be put in possession of a commentary that would warrant them to doubt the order, their sentiments would escape from a heavy pressure. They would be heard to say, that what they are now told agrees with ideas that had often crossed their minds, but which they did not dare to harbour. They would certainly acknowledge, that they had not been aware how much they were enslaved, until the charter of their liberty had been spread out before them, and until they had been convinced how clear was their title to freedom. An interpretation that would prove that men attach an erroneous meaning to three or four passages bearing on this question, would bring joy to many hearts, that are trammelled as yet, and that do not venture to think that they are otherwise than free. But the consenting feelings of spiritual men have some significance. They are the expression of much prayer, experience and reflection. Were they ten times stronger than they are, they would not overturn one definite order. But if from other sources it can be made to appear, that we have been mistaken in our idea of the command, then all these impressions and doubts would come in as strong collateral arguments.

Second. The observation that we have already applied to the sacrament of Baptism, so called, viz—that no time, place or mode are specified, is equally applicable to this case. It is not said, *when* the act is to be performed, or

where, or under what circumstances. The Church has already admitted this to be true, it is too late for it to attempt a contrary statement. But is it not the very *essence* of a rite, that all such details should be strictly laid down? From any thing that we learn from Scripture, a ceremony cannot be said to have an existence without such particulars. It is by means of such points that it possesses efficacy, and becomes the instrument of inculcating doctrines. Divest it of these, and it is turned into a mere vocable. We are enabled to derive these conclusions from a surface of great breadth. The ceremonies of the Old Testament are many in number, and of them all there is not one but complies with these conditions. It was by means of these that, so long as they lasted, they exerted a police influence over men. It is by translating such details into their doctrinal equivalent, that the Church extracts thoughts from what once were rites. But a ceremony shorn of all such particulars, is an anomalous fact. The Church has thought itself entitled to supply the defect. It has taken the liberty to conclude that what it calls the Lord's Day or Sabbath must of course be the *time*; but it has not been able to come at any agreement, how often the first day of the week is to be the scene of the transaction. It has inferred that what it terms the house of God, is to be the *place* where the rite is to be performed; but no one sect allows that the Synagogue of the other is fitly constituted. It has given *accompanying circumstances* to the ceremony, but these are arbitrary: they do not agree in any two sects, and scarcely in any two congregations within the same sect. As to the *person* who is to dispense the rite, a result has been arrived at, but the process by which it has been attained to, is as curiously gratuitous as any thing that we know in the annals of human sophistry. Here is the syllogism. The Apos-

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tles were the agents whom Christ commissioned to go forth
 and teach the gospel, *therefore* they were the persons de-
 signed to preside at this rite. But Christian ministers
 are the successors of the Apostles, *therefore* it devolves
 upon them to administer this Sacrament. Is there a step
 in this deduction, that is anything but an assumption?—
 Was it *only* on the Apostles that Christ laid the injunc-
 tion to go and teach a' nations, or did he not rather im-
 pose it upon every believer in his name? Even supposing
 that the order had respect to the twelve alone, by what fair
 means can the inference be drawn, that the command to
 teach, necessarily involved an injunction "to serve ta-
 bles?" How could twelve men contrive to overtake all
 the work of this sort, that must have occurred in their
 mission over the world? Admitting by way of argument,
 that to celebrate this hypothetical ordinance, was one part
 of the duty of the Apostles, what is the mode of reasoning
 by which the ministers of our day, are made out to be
 the descendants of the twelve? In which of the hundred
 lines that aspire to the honour, is the real genealogy to
 be found? In which of them all are the virtues and the
 gifts to be seen, that ought surely to occur along a line
 that lays claim to so illustrious a descent? A man who
 can look straight before him must perceive, that this pre-
 tended argument is a series of evident assumptions. It is
 a gratuitous statement that the command to go and evan-
 gelise, was addressed only to the Apostles; it is equally
 gratuitous to affirm, that the injunction to teach neces-
 sarily comprehended the obligation to preside at this ce-
 remony; it is also a mere assumption to assert, that the
 powers and prerogatives of the twelve, are transmitted
 down to that class of men which we term Christian mi-
 nisters. Each one of these positions is procured by felony.
 To hold them is to bring in that inextricable jumble.

wherein no two sects agree as to the meaning of the rite, its time, its place, its attendant circumstances, the character of those who are to celebrate it, and that of those who are to partake of it. In this manner a ceremony is not *found*, but *created*. All those points which the Scriptures indicate as the very elements of such a thing, are not taken from the surface of the bible, but are inferred according to the inclination of those who bargain for a rite. The *when*, the *where*, the *how*, and the *who*, are not *copied*, but *forged*. The mode of inference is in this wise—Scripture enjoins a ceremony, but it is obvious that the day intended must be the Lord's day, and it is plain that the place must be our house of God, and it is clear that the Coryphaeus who is to conduct the matter must be our Apostolic pastor, and it is evident that the several details are left to ourselves because the Gospël is a system of freedom, and it is manifest that none but believers are entitled to partake—although among the twelve who set us the example, one was "a devil!" Could we imagine a series of propositions more purely hypothetical, or more adapted to lead to a gratuitous plan of religion? There is nothing like this in the Old Testament, the great magazine of rites. There, when an ordinance is enjoined, all its particulars are specified. There, the shape and outline are defined. There, nothing is left to inference. Any number of men could observe the ceremonies there exhibited, without the risk of division of opinion in regard to the details. With its authority to guide us, we lay down the position with much confidence, that this thing cannot be a ceremony, which specifies no time, place or manner. It may be a *doctrine*, because that is a fact which is catholic and independent of these accessories, it cannot be a *rite* because it derives its character from these features, and is entirely dependent of

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them. A rite which requires that men should infer, and guess, and fancy out its details, is to say the least, unlike any thing else that we find in any other part of the sacred volume.

Third. We do not believe in this pretended rite, because the notion of a *sacrament* is destructive of the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood. *It* exhibits the idea of spiritual equality among the members of the Church. It gives out the thought of one homogeneous body. A sacrament puts such views to the rout. It demands a mystical personage to preside, and he never can fall in with the other members. The symbolic act which he performs, is considered to carry salvation along with it, and the man is invested with the character of that which he is supposed to do. Here is a fact that is subversive of all equality, and in our opinion, is also a deadly enemy to real holiness. A person who deals in such enigmatical wares, cannot by possibility coincide with the general body of the Church. Were he willing to do so, which he never is, society would not suffer him. Men consider it to be their interest, to keep him up in his atmosphere of clouds. They cannot afford to allow him to descend. His office makes him a sacrificer for others, and men love to retain him in this category. A person who to-day is occupied in handing about that which saves, cannot be permitted to become one of the rank and file to-morrow. *Preaching* may give to one man an intellectual or moral elevation above his fellows—but this is a wholesome and orthodox influence; a sacrament imparts to him a mystical superiority, which is bad, which is immoral, which always lives in friendly association with every form of vice. From the days of the Gods of Greece to our own times, where there is a got-up mystery in one chamber of the temple, there is harlotry, corporeal or mental, in

the others. Where mysticism is the doctrine, the fruits are murder, adultery, and theft. They were so in the palmy days of heathenism ; they are so still under the ceremonial Christianity which obtains.

Besides, he is invested with a weapon which can assume almost any shape. It can be made to look like absolute rationalism to the reasonable, whilst to the mystical it can be rendered the one thing needful, by being represented as that which conveys salvation. To the one it is described as a memorial of their dear Lord—nothing more ; to the other it is exhibited as that which brings eternal life to their souls, thereby sparing them any expenditure of thought and virtue. A man armed with this *sliding scale* of delicate adjustment and wide range, can do almost what he likes with society. No one can escape him, except he who is willing to run all risks, by taking or being described as taking, the attitude of avowed infidelity. No weapon formed against this very moveable feast can prosper, for before the ball can reach it, it has dived. It sees the flash, and changes its situation before the projectile can strike. Proteus himself had not a greater faculty for assuming new forms.

The idea which the Levitical priesthood gives out, cannot by any possibility be realised, so long as the least vestige of a sacrament remains. Let the smallest nucleus be left, and the disease will grow to any extent. A sacrament by moral necessity, *breeds a class of sacrificers*.—These cannot, even if they be pious men, coincide with the rest of the elect. Their function makes them a distinct body. Let them state the matter as low as they will, they cannot coalesce with the general church. The strange work which they do, prevents them from harmonizing with those amongst whom they minister. It cannot be looked for, that they should be willing to place the

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function in a simple point of view. but even if they are, it carries hell and damnation with it. Society, too, will always be ready to assist them in giving the most mystical aspect to the affair. When they impart to it the appearance of a potent spell, an awful incantation, they are not shocking human nature, *but are pandering to its tastes.*—Men do not love holiness, but they are fond of pageants; they have no relish for moral persons who might awe and win them into virtue, but they have always liked sacrificers; they do not affect that creed which would tell them to pray and think and work out their own salvation, but they have a decided inclination to that other, which offers to save them by *machinery*. The action of a sacrament is after this manner: It demands a ceremonial man to *work* it, it renders him a distinct person, and it helps to make him what he commonly is, a serpent. But this creature, such as he is, is the teacher who is to instruct the mass, is the leaven that is to give its character to the whole lump. What the sacrament renders him, he makes others. His nature becomes diffused. A family likeness between the sacramentarian and his progeny, is the sure result.—In some directions the cry is to be heard, feebly uttered, he who teaches others should himself be taught of God. The dispenser of sacraments is too strong for this—he can put it down, or he can evade it. How can he be otherwise than Godly; of apostolic descent, assembling men on a sacred day, addressing men in a holy edifice, supplying them with rites that are the conductors of salvation; how can his piety be called in question? Hence nothing can be more puny than the onsets that are made upon these strongholds of Satan, called Churches. Nothing can be less efficient than the attempts that are made, to drive their functionaries into sincerity and religion. The pressure sometimes forces them to do their spiritings more adroitly

—it seldom reduces them to the necessity of becoming new men. The reason is, that the pietists do not lay the axe to the root of the tree. They who call for reformation are themselves under the influence of what breeds the evil. They are men who have been saved in spite of rites. The sacrificer is always too formidable for them. He can laugh at their weak maunderings about piety. He can retire behind his altar, and defy them to follow him. He can summon numbers round him, and alarm his feeble opponents for their standing and their purse. He knows a trick worth two of theirs. Like Gregory, in Rome, and Juliet, he has “a swashing blow,” that puts them to flight. When they call *piety*, he calls *church*. On a moderate calculation, one sacrificer who understands his weapon, and has no scruples about using it, is a match for all the religionists of a country. He is contending with those who grant his premises, who believe in holy places, days, rites, and men holy by office. *They* hold no doubt that there is something besides. They maintain the doctrine of a new heart, but he can easily contrive to throw this into the back-ground, or when pressed to the utmost, make it appear that he also acquiesces in it. He can always bring down rank, wealth, and numbers, against the little body of feeble adversaries; and when he cannot compel them to add their influence to his cause, he can generally make their opposition futile.

The idea that we gather from the survey of the Levitical priesthood, does not at all correspond with sacraments, and their performers. In the one direction we perceive a homogeneous body, in the other a people “scattered and peeled.” In the one quarter we behold an assembly, every fact in whose constitution gives out a doctrine; in the other, a society rent, distracted, and besotted by rites.—In the one instance we see that which tells of a moral

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nation a peculiar people zealous of good works, in the other a community zealous for little else but the politics of the sect. In the one case we notice that which informs us of agreement and freedom; in the other we find realised some of the worst results of discord and mental thralldom. The type speaks of unity, harmony, knowledge, liberty, and holiness; the practical expression which the churches afford of their interpretation of the symbol, exhibits features that are the very converse of these. In our judgment, sacraments go far to produce the difference. Put one or more of them in the possession of a shrewd man, and he will bring any country into the state to which we refer. All the ignorant will desire to come under his influence. Wealth, power and talent, will float with the current. Fair women will gild the pageant; clever men will give it wings to fly. The general population will vie together to receive the mark of the beast on their forehead or in their hands, and the really good, because they do not understand the root of the disorder, will resist in that faint undecided manner, which only makes the victory of evil principles to seem more complete and triumphant.

Fourth. This rite is of bad influence, because it gives rise to doubtful and varying interpretations of many scriptures. There are passages whose meaning is to this effect, that except we eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, there is no life in us. A great number of texts express this thought directly, or by implication. The existence of a ceremony where bread is eaten, and wine is drunk, very naturally occasions that these sayings are made over to it. The idea springs up, and has likelihood to help it, that to partake of this rite is to feed on Christ. Hence in the nineteen centuries that have elapsed, the prevalent opinion has certainly been this—

Few have risen superior to it. The highest minds along the period, have bent before it. Those that have really laid hold on eternal life, have fought their way to it over the top of this thought. The opinion is fearfully dangerous. It is of such a character, that the most of those who turn a little of their attention to religion, *must be slain by it*. Any man who directs but a part of his feelings toward divine things, must of necessity become its victim. Here are many texts which declare, that to eat Christ is to be saved; but here is a rite which in one sense or other pretends to offer Christ as food for his people. How very natural that those who observe the rite, should consider that they come in for the benefit of those promises! Scriptures many and plain declare, that the heirs of eternal life make the Lord Jesus their food. Divines with one consent insist upon the incumbency of a rite, whereof the act of eating and drinking is the apparent mechanism. What can be imagined more natural, than that the majority of mankind should cherish the idea, that to practise the rite, is to perform that deed which confers salvation? Hence up to this time, this, or something like to this, has been the general feeling.

A part of the Protestant Church has laboured strenuously to prove, that this opinion is not Scriptural, and that it is pernicious. The rite is retained, it is admitted to confer benefits, but these happen only to what are termed, "worthy receivers." Thus one portion of Christendom allows men to think, that the blessing descends upon those who partake of the Eucharist *administered by a fit organ*, the other gives them to suppose, that the promise comes down *upon worthy receivers*. The one consider that the benefit is associated with duly ordered machinery, the other deem that it stands connected with faith on the part of the recipient. The one, although their

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system is monstrous, pursue an intelligible course; the
 others have a strange twist in their mode of reasoning.—
 The one say roundly, we feed on Christ in taking our
 communion, the others say metaphysically, we feed on
 Christ in taking our communion, *provided that* our souls
 are in the right state. The Papist who says that the flesh
 and blood of Christ are revealed in the Eucharist, al-
 though he is in grievous error, is *comprehensible*. We
 understand him to take certain texts in their literal or car-
 nal sense. The Protestant who holds, that we eat and
 that we do not eat the Saviour in the rite, if his view be
 not so gross, acts more artfully. If he really believes as
 he pretends, that Christ is mentally or spiritually appre-
 hended, why does he observe a rite? He must know that
 a rite is not requisite to a spiritual apprehension of Christ,
 because if he be a converted man, he must be aware that
 he is holding fellowship with the Saviour at all times, and
 without the mediation of a rite. If he considers that there
 is something more than a mental apprehension of Mes-
 siah, in the rite, why does he not say so, and shew what
 that is? The Papist, although his tenet is bestial, uses
 plain language, the Protestant has a sliding scale which
 he shifts to suit different cases. Surely no man of God
 will deny, that his moral life is engrossed in apprehend-
 ing Christ by faith. He will acknowledge that this is
 an act which may be performed under all circumstances.
 He will confess that there is no situation that necessarily
 shuts him out from such intercourse. He will own that
 this is the very essence of the religion which he embraced,
 when he received the spirit. Does the rite affect this fel-
 lowship; does it render it more close; does it add fea-
 tures that could not exist without it, and does Scripture
 bear us out in saying that it has such effects?

But this is not the whole of the twist. Holy writ says

expressly, he that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. The Protestant distinction of worthy receivers, applied to a rite, complicates the question. A rite is an outward act, but the worthy and the unworthy receiver equally partake in that act, therefore according to the hypothesis both feed on Christ.—When our Lord said, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you, he must have meant either a carnal or a mental act—he could not have intended both. If he contemplated the first, then there is no room for the distinction of worthy and unworthy receivers; if he designed the second, then he could not have instituted or sanctioned a rite.

No shifting scene of a strolling theatre, could serve more various purposes, than this ceremony called the Lord's Supper. Where parade is the order of the day, it is dressed up in such a style as to prove that Christianity can be as gorgeous as Paganism. When the object is to recruit the particular sect, it can be made to do good service either by opening its arms in an Universalist manner, announcing that it receives all, or quite as effectually by an air of awful strictness, and the stern declaration, that none but children of God must sit down at this table.—Where it has to deal with rank, and wealth, and worldly business dressed in authority, it can conveniently represent itself as a strong engine, worked by much priest-power, whereby men are saved and sanctified, on easy terms, and with little trouble. Where it confronts persons of mind or piety, it can divest itself of its trappings, and wear the appearance of a plain mental circumstance, which God has instituted as the memorial of a solemn event. On the whole, men in general are under the impression, that when they join in this observance, they are eating Christ's flesh and drinking his blood. When Protestantism

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sires to do battle with Popery, in any one of its forms, it
loudly declares that the benefit is obtained only by wor-
day receivers; but this makes only an inconsiderable im-
pression, because all the while that it speaks thus, it con-
tinues to practice the rite.

Further, there is a twist in the argument, in this cir-
cumstance, that Scripture affirms that to eat Christ is
to receive salvation, whereas the Protestant Church says
that *it is, and is not*. The Bible gives out the idea, that
to do the act, whether it be a ceremony or a mental ex-
ercise, is to receive salvation; the reformed churches
make this to depend on an hypothesis. The word of God
treats it as an act which is one and unambiguous, Protes-
tant Divines represent it as that, which saves or does not
save, according to circumstances. From these consid-
erations and before entering upon other weighty arguments,
we conclude that the Lord's supper is not a carnal ban-
quet, as Papists describe it, nor a metaphysical quibble as
Protestants love to exhibit it, but an act continued through
life, whereby the Christian under the guidance of the spi-
rit, eats the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, and
rightly divides it to others.

Fifth. We question the divine authority of this cere-
mony, because as we believe, its *practical results* are
decidedly bad. No true friend of the Gospel will be sa-
tisfied, in being told of any pretended ordinance that
controuls. The religion of God ought to *convert*.—
We must take a low view of the capabilities of the truth,
who is contented with police effects. We do not deny
that this ceremony is a good constable, but in owning
it, we do not believe that we have said much in its
favour. There are other passions as pernicious as vio-
lence and licentiousness, and an institution that finds men
deceitful, and leaves them cunning, has not really effected a

moral result. It has prevailed on them to *change* their vices, it has not shut them up to the necessity of a new heart. This distinction seems too subtle, to be understood by the most of mankind. In the reforms which they generally aim at, they appear to be satisfied when they explode one shape of evil, even although it is immediately succeeded by another. The bible contemplates *radical* results, and those entertain weak conceptions of its powers, who amuse themselves with the superficial effects which they see or fancy to spring from secondary causes. Those who are well enough pleased with decencies, will not be persuaded to follow us in our analysis, because the ceremony is productive of all that they value. Those who desire something more thorough, may be induced to give us their attention, because the ceremony does not resist such results, but on the contrary resists them.

It does harm because it saves and does not save. Owing to the loose and varying interpretation of certain Scriptures that prevails, the impression throughout Christianity is, that salvation is connected with the ritual. A proof of this is, that after a man has been operated upon in this matter, he seldom or never repents. He has obtained a mysterious something that quiets the conscience. He is not convinced that it is well with him, but he is satisfied enough to be content to remain as he is. The preparatory movements through which he was passed before he was taken, the ominous solemnities associated with the ceremony itself, these made such an impression, that the man is incapable ever after of experiencing feelings more genuine. Nine men out of every ten that we meet, shew by their tokens, that their relation to the gospel is specious, not actual. They refuse however, to erect a real connection. No possible motive presented to them will persuade them to come in. Of this spurious religion

to change the pretended sacrament which we are discussing, is, a principle of necessity of a principal element. It is represented as something so very awfully, to be understood, that it sinks into the mind, and becomes the parent of reforms which resist all the approaches of real holiness. The man who has taken part in it, commonly acts ever after as if he wished nothing more. Even he who has looked on, who has surveyed the act in the distance, generally believes in after life as if he considered that enough of piety was propagated by the solemnity, to sanctify the bystanders. This ceremony well managed in its preliminaries with decencies, and its several parts, always furnishes a sufficient apology for the great majority of mankind, to stop there. A devious priest, by its aid alone, can contrive to attract the population of a Province round his person, preventing them from closing with true religion.

We further distrust this rite, because in one form or other, it erects the *Confessional*. The Bible advances principles that tend to make men free and equal. The functions which it produces between men, are of an *actual* and *moral* nature. It is the declared enemy of differences in religion that do not spring out of such causes. The official, where there is nothing besides, is certainly not valued in the christian system. This ceremony has a direct tendency to foster much that scripture reprobates, in every page. It puts society under the domination of a man, not because he is able to do it good, but because he has a rite to dispense. It places the mind, which is susceptible and tender, under the tuition of a man who has every interest to steep it in superstition. It opens the most secret feelings of the nature to a stationary, who by this means gets a hold that he probably never afterwards loses. It accustoms the mind to subordination, and teaches it to think that the fear of God is a good principle, whilst it is one of the most pernicious.

nicious. When the mind goes through this critical ordeal at the age at which the character is very sensitive, is it strange that it forms the opinion that something important has been done for it? When age, authority, station, perhaps talent and cunning, are thus brought down upon youth, simplicity, and inexperience, is it wonder if the victim imagines that all this *manipulation* must surely have done great things for his soul? Let those who doubt this, read the effects produced by Prince Hoherlohe and other conjurors, and the account of the methods by which they were accomplished, and they will see that the nerves play a conspicuous part in the economy of human nature.

We further question the authenticity of this rite, because it requires protestation and profession, whereas the word of truth stipulates for a life that is *hidden* with Christ in God. The theory of religion that we would collect from the example of the founder of our faith, and from the bible in general, is to the effect that the pious man hides the truth in his heart, that he avoids obtruding his principles on society, that he is content that his Master should know the state of his feelings, that he leaves it to his God to bring out his righteousness, and to make it known. This scheme of things is so deeply wrought into the texture of revelation, that it would require no ordinary display of evidence to prove the authority of a practice that would go to establish the very opposite line of action. Reason, too, comes in to the support of this general theory. It says that a man, by shutting up his sentiments to common observation, secures to himself liberty of thought. It suggests, that by so husbanding them, he keeps them fresh, and avoids contracting an immodest character. It remarks, that by so acting, he is of necessity forced to a closer communion with God. It concludes, that when

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is thus debarred from seeking to affect mankind by mere protestation, if he would do them good at all, he is driven to influence them in the way of notable and vigorous conduct. To have liberty of feeling, to retain the sentiments in freshness and strength, to be compelled into intercourse with heaven, to be obliged to adopt that line of procedure which is the surest and most legitimate road to the hearts of men, the plan which guarantees such results must be of God. The system that contradicts it can hardly be shewn to be divine. But the course of action to which this rite points, runs counter to the scheme which we believe to be that of the bible. It says, publish your sentiments, inform the world by a pageant that you do not belong to it. In this way, the privacy of man's heart is violated, his sentiments are made the prey of the designing and the ostentatious, his liberty takes wing, he acquires a whore's forehead and cannot blush, he is borne along by the association of numbers whose ways he has adopted, he does not feel the necessity of close fellowship with God, he cannot strongly influence men, because he has little else but profession to shew them. His feelings escape by so many chinks, that they do not propel him forward in a career that differs much from the course of this evil world. Observation advances and informs us, that the results which we have reasoned out, coincide with the condition of the churches as they are now, and as they have always been. The convert, real or pretended, has been held to the necessity of declaring his feelings, he has become the property of the sect, he has been encouraged to talk his religion all around, he has been valued in the measure that he has done so, he has been used as an agent to enlist for his party, he has never in any one instance attained to the stature of the scripture worthies, he has made partisans, but he has invariably had small success in producing be-

lievers. His very name, *a professor*, tells what he is, and by what system he has been reared. When we pass in review the different ages of ecclesiastical history, and when we perceive that the whole ground is occupied by a class of men, the very counterparts of those Pharisees whom Jesus describes and brands, we find enough to lead us to pause and put the question, are not these effects the natural necessary fruits of those rites which we practice, and of that general system which is advocated ?

Sixth. In practising this rite, we seem to be doing an act of an Old Testament quality. No one denies, that under the first economy, FEASTS formed an important item in the list of sacred institutes. The sane mind wishes to know what is the specific difference between this practice and these Jewish festivals ? These old customs were declaredly *types*, and the men of the New Testament shew their belief of this, by seeking to turn them into doctrines. But the sober inquirer asks, if in observing this feast we design to serve as types to the men of some future period ? In analysing the scriptures, the rule which the Spirit teaches us to follow, is, to convert the ceremonial into the moral. The principle has been much used, and the effects of it are known to be good. But the reasoner puts the question, why has not the rule been extended to the present case, why do we retain a carnal act, and try to disguise it by terming it spiritual ? In looking at the catalogue of Jewish festivals, the feast of weeks, of ingathering, of the jubilee, &c., we perceive that the principle adopted by the Church has been, to consider that these things ceased to have validity as rites, after the death of Christ. But the analyst requests to be informed, why an exception has been made to the rule, why the *Passover* is still in use, or rather why an abridged or mangled edition of it, is retained, and dubbed a Chris-

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tian ordinance? In the course of the Psalms and Prophets, there are many references to feasts that are to take place in the latter days. The bride in the Song of Solomon says of the Redeemer, "He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love;" language of a similar strain runs through the subsequent parts of the sacred volume; Isaiah speaks of a feast of fat things to which the nations are to repair, and several of the other Prophets take up the theme and render it conspicuous, by enlarging on it. The thought is carried over into the Gospels. It enters into the parable of the Prodigal son, it is the main idea in the wedding feast, and it is adverted to in other discourses and parables of Christ. The same figurative mode of speech pervades the Epistles, as when it is said, "Christ our Passover is slain for us," when false brethren are described as "feeding themselves without fear," or when it is predicated of the like persons, "spots they are in your feasts of charity." The canonical method by which all such passages in either economy are interpreted, is, by finding equivalents for them in ideas relating to the dispensation of the Gospel. These feasts of the Old Testament, these entertainments spoken of by Jesus, are construed as shadowing forth spiritual facts in the history of that kingdom "which is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is not thought requisite in the cases to which we refer, *to translate a feast by a feast*. In these examples, the antitype of the natural figure is understood to consist in a moral principle. Why should the rule be violated in a solitary instance? Why should the words "Do this in remembrance of me," given out in the period of shadows, and before the advent of the spirit; why should they be tried by a criterion different from that by which we try all similar texts? The ceremony is indeed a

strange anomaly. It is not a faithful imitation of the Passover, for it wants some of the main particulars which distinguished that feast. It is not a spiritual fact, because it is made up of carnal incidents. It does not correspond with any thing ritual that was done in the old economy : as little does it agree with any thing else that we are required to perform under the new and better covenant.— Perhaps because it does not tally with any other ceremony, its abettors have pronounced it to be a moral event.— Because it is a lean rite they have concluded that it is an evangelical fact. And this bald piece of outward circumstance is that, which during so many centuries, has lorded it over the minds of men !

Seventh. There are passages in the New Testament which lay down principles that to us appear quite hostile to this or any other rite. Thus when Paul says, that “The kingdom of God is not *meat* and *drink*, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost,” he makes a statement that seems to correspond with the general thesis that we seek to defend. It is easy to reconcile the doctrine with our theory, and it looks impracticable to make it agree with a sacrament, whereof eating and drinking are the constituent elements. He erects a position of a similar character, when he brings this charge against the Galatians, “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years.” He is still more to our purpose, when he addresses the church of Colosse in these terms, “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body of Christ.” Above all, he appears to establish a principle utterly at variance with ceremonies or sacraments, in the following passage of the epistle to the Hebrews, “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest

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of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing. Which was a figure *for the time then present.*, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect. as pertaining to the conscience. Which stood only in *meats and drinks*, and divers washings, imposed on them *until the time of reformation.*" These are specimens of the kind of scriptures to which we refer. There are many more to the like effect, and we are disposed to think that there are several quite as strong as those which we have adduced.

Eighth. We come to the analysis of the scriptures that directly bear on the subject. These are few in number. The narratives of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and a portion of the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, shut in the question. Its solution entirely depends upon the interpretation that may be given to these. It is comfortable to think that it lies within such moderate limits. Other passages no doubt may be brought in both from Old and New Testament that are connected with the subject, but they are collateral and not direct. If it can be proved that the five scriptures which we have specified, do not demand a rite, there is no difficulty in reconciling any other texts with this conclusion.

In regard to the passage in Matthew, the difficulty seems to be, not to get rid of a ceremony, but to find the warrant for one. It informs us in *six* distinct cases, that it was the *Passover* which Jesus and the disciples observed. But no one pretends that *it* is of obligation now. Whilst they were eating, "Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples;" but every one knows that this was also the feast of unleavened *bread*. In taking it, he took an element which formed a necessary ingredient in the festival. But he did more than this, "he said, Take,

eat: this is my body." Those who think that, in so speaking, he commanded a rite, forget the circumstances of the occasion. The age of shadows was still in existence, the veil of the temple was not yet rent in twain, the economy of the Holy Spirit had not yet opened, the speaker, in so far as he was a man, was a Jew, it was his vocation to observe the law in all its particulars. His teaching was chiefly parabolic, many of the acts which he did are admitted by all to have been symbolic. When he breathed upon the disciples, and said, "receive ye the Holy Ghost," it was a ceremony and not a fact that he did. The disciples did *not* receive the Holy Ghost at that time, for the first Chapter of the Acts describes Jesus commanding them to tarry at Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high, and it is not until the second chapter of that book, that we see them actually obtaining the promise of the Father. In another instance, Jesus girds himself with a towel, and washes the feet of the disciples. But the churches, with one solitary exception, admit that this act was symbolical, that it was intended to inculcate humility and love, and that it is to be imitated not in the letter but in the spirit. By what system of metaphysics do we make out that Jesus using water, acted in a figurative manner—and that when he broke bread at the Passover, he acted in a spiritual manner? By comparing the Gospels, we find that both acts took place on the same occasion, and in both instances there was an injunction given to go and do so likewise. Why do we respect the order in the one case, and reject it in the other? Is there a true line of distinction between breaking bread and washing with water? Is the one essentially evangelical, whilst the other is obviously carnal? One Gospel apprises us that he rises from Supper, that he washes the disciples feet, and that, when he had completed the act, he said, "if I then, your Lord and

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"Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." Another Gospel informs us that, during the Supper, that is to say, on the same occasion, he took bread and gave to the disciples. According to our system of exposition, the former was a figurative, the latter was a spiritual act; the one belonged to the Old Testament, the other is entitled to rank with the real and moral facts of the New Testament! What parity of interpretation is there in this?

Moreover, this is not the only place in which Jesus speaks of eating his flesh. In the sixth chapter of John, he prosecutes the subject through more than thirty verses, and when after the long disquisition, "Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the son of man ascend up where he was before? It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." In this chapter of John, we have the *symbol* and the *gloss*, the type and the doctrine. The symbol is, "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life." The gloss is, "Let not this idea offend you. I am about to withdraw my body from you, and to ascend up into heaven, there will then be no possibility of eating my flesh in a carnal sense. Learn then that I teach you by figures, and that it is the words which I speak that are spirit and life. By receiving them into your heart, you participate in my nature, and in a real sense perform that act which I have been shadowing forth in a metaphorical manner." No one quarrels with this interpretation, when it is applied to a long paragraph in John; but very few would admit its application to a short passage in Matthew. When we peruse the statement in one instance, wherein it is said that life is to be obtained by eating the flesh and drinking the blood

of Christ, we readily admit that the *spirit* of the thought is to be taken. When we read it in another case, we contend that the act cannot be performed without a *symbol*. What is the essential difference between the passage in John, and that in Matthew? The same act is insisted on in both. The only distinction that we can perceive is, that John dwells upon it more, and speaks with greater emphasis. He recurs to it once and again, he repeats it several times. Yet as far as this scripture goes, no one sees the necessity for anything ritual; but we go up to a passage briefer and less pointed, and we affirm of it that it makes a rite imperative. One Scripture that speaks of eating and drinking, we render evangelically, and say, that it refers to acts of the soul; another that discourses of the same matter, but more shortly, we interpret as exacting of us carnal doings, and a Jewish ceremony. Do we try the two by the same equal measure?

Matthew proceeds to tell, that Jesus "took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying: Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." On this statement is founded the practice of using wine at what we call the communion.—We gather very evidently from it that Jesus handed a cup to the disciples, and that they drank of it. But the question at issue is, what is to be derived from this fact; was it a symbolic act that shut in a thought, or was it one that is evangelical in itself, and that is to be done over again in its original form and style? We consider that the answer lies *within* the passage. We are decidedly of opinion, that those who derive a rite from it cannot have fully weighed the several parts of the narrative. When the cup

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is handed round, the commentary is added, "for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins;" which statement, looked at in the form in which Paul puts it, is even less ambiguous—"This cup is the New Testament in my blood." As if Jesus had said, drink of this cup, use this symbol, and thereby give expression to the fact, that the philosophy of that New Testament, which begins after my blood shall be shed is, that my people shall be participators in my nature. Surely a reason existed, why the twelve should take the cup, that has no force now. The blood was not yet shed. To stand beside Christ *before* he dies, and *after* he dies, is not the same thing. To hear him say, *I am* shortly to die, and *I have* died, is not to listen to the same statements. The Apostles at the Passover certainly did not stand in that attitude to Jesus which we now occupy. They were in the age of types; the scene on Calvary was not yet enacted; the veil of the temple was not rent; Messiah had not expired, and the Holy Spirit was not yet given. To stand by the Redeemer before his mission was accomplished, when he yet walked with men, and when he taught in parables, before the main act of his career was fulfilled, and before the fruits of his sacrifice were realized in the revelation of the Spirit; to be with him at such a period, and to hold fellowship with him now, are different relations. To take a cup from his hands in the former category, and to drink it, was to do an act of the same texture with the other particulars of the economy which then subsisted. During the period when the temple still stood, when men were circumcised, when they practised diverse washings, when they offered sacrifices and ate the passover; in a time when the Saviour spoke face to face with mankind, and threw all his teaching into the figurative form, and by

washing feet told of brotherly love, and by breathing shadowed forth the descent of the Spirit, and by scourging men out of the temple, intimated the fate of hypocrites and hirelings; during the subsistence of an economy which delivered all its instructions in the mythical style, it was an act germane to the whole matter, for Jesus to hand this cup to the disciples. There is a *generic* distinction between us and the men who drank it, *when* they drank it. There is the difference that there is between the Old Testament and the New, between the day of shadows and the era of the spirit, between the anticipation of events and the looking back upon these after they have happened. When Jesus on one occasion used this language—"He that believeth in me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," he had a good reason for employing this style, and it is explained in the context, "But this spake he of the spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The import of these words is to the effect that our Lord spoke in type until the antitype made his appearance. He discoursed of water, and did so rightfully, previous to the disclosure of the personage to whom that element pointed. In like manner, in the example now before us, he had not shed his blood, he was not yet glorified, the spirit was not yet revealed, and therefore it was in character with all surrounding circumstances that his followers should drink in type that New Testament which had not come in fact. They who stood before the death of the son, and the advent of the spirit, the circumstances that brought in the Gospel, might properly do *then*, what would be quite unfit either for themselves or others to do *afterwards*. A telescope is suitable when the object is remote, it is out of place when the object is reached. A cup was a fit shadow of the New

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Testament before it came, when it is come it needs no symbol. To drink it in type before the event happens is reasonable, to continue to drink the cup when we may drink the New Testament itself, is absurd and pernicious. It cannot be made out that we stand on the ground that the twelve occupied when Jesus gave them the cup. They stood on the territory of the Old Testament; the events that give its character to the new Covenant had not occurred. They were *near*, but they were not yet *present*. In virtue of the fact that they had not arrived, it was agreeable to the method of Scripture that they should be indicated by types until they happened. Thus a specific line separates us from the predicament in which the twelve were, when they drank the cup. They were looking forward to the incidents that compose the New Testament, we are in the situation to look back upon them. For them to receive the cup was to obtain a pledge from the founder of our faith, that the kingdom of heaven was about to commence; whereas we do not need to be informed of this fact through a symbol, seeing that it is confirmed to us by the spirit and the word. We do not require carnal evidence when spiritual testimony is proffered. To accept the evidence of symbols is, and has always been, equivalent to refusing the testimony of the Holy Ghost.—Surely men who scarcely knew that Jesus was the Christ, who had no clear idea that he was to suffer as a sacrifice for sin, who were in great darkness about the person and coming of the Spirit, and who even if they had understood these points, were only contemplating them in the distance; surely they were in a position different from ours. For them to receive a symbol as an assurance that certain things were to happen, accords with sound reason; for us to accept the same symbol, is preposterous, because we know from much superior evidence that they have

happened. To live before the Spirit appeared, and to live after his advent, are surely distinct cases.

These positions are strengthened by the words which form the sequel of the transaction—"for I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of *this* fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it *new* with you in my Father's kingdom." This statement more than any other part of the narrative, coincides with the view which we advocate. The transaction that had been gone through, was not to be repeated after the style that had been employed. The Saviour when he again met with his people, was to do so in a *new* mode. What is there that is really new in the Lord's Supper, as we celebrate it? Does a rite because it is shorn of the leading circumstances of that from which it sprung, deserve this title? We can conceive that which seems far better to merit the name. By general consent the expression "my Father's kingdom," is understood to mean the economy that arose *after* the manifestation of the Spirit. The words of Christ then amount to this—when the Spirit comes, I will drink in a new method with you. On the first view of the subject, to sit down at a table and drink wine is to follow out the *old* style. To the eye it would appear, that it is still a ceremony that we practise, and that the only thing new about it is, that it is an incorrect copy of the ancient rite. A worthy comment on the words of the Saviour, would be something that besides being new, was also *true*. Paul assists us in arriving at such an idea when he says, "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held: that we should serve in *newness of spirit*, and not in *the oldness of the letter*." By the admission of all theologians, the *general* character of the dispensation under which we live, is doctrinal or moral. They resist this definition a little when they stipulate for a *few* rites or

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sacraments, but in the main this is the genius which they agree in awarding to it. Applying this broad principle to the text under review, the results that might be fairly derived from it, would seem to be to this effect. Jesus before he dies celebrates the last legitimate passover that was to be observed on the earth. On this occasion he puts bread and wine into the hands of the Apostles: he exhibits the one as a symbol of his body to be broken, the other of his blood that was to be shed; he advertises them that he will drink no more of *this* fruit of the vine, until the time that he shall drink it new in the dispensation of grace. Pursuing the method by which types are translated into doctrines, the conclusion that would grow out of this would be,—in the spiritual kingdom I will communicate with you in that method which is congenial to it. I will put you in possession of the reality in place of the mere symbol. If this version of the subject should convey vague and meagre ideas to the churches, we answer that this is to be expected. If the *thought* hitherto has been completely buried under the *rite*, it cannot be anticipated that on the instant the rite is removed, the whole grandeur of the doctrine should blaze forth on the mind. Still, a small fraction of a thought is better than a mere ceremony; and if we can start on the new career with some new capital, analogy entitles us to suppose, that our wealth will augment as we advance on the way. Christ will drink it new with his followers, that is to say he will partake of it in accordance with the genius of the economy to which he pointed, he will communicate intellectually, and without the medium of visible furniture.

In summing up what is narrated by Matthew, we are led to remark, that on this occasion Jesus did a symbolic act in perfect keeping with the economy then in operation, in complete harmony with his own previous conduct.

in strict accordance with what he said and did in other instances that are admitted to exact no rite, and in agreement with what might have been looked for, seeing that symbols were of obligation until the substance came. We conclude that *we* are not called upon to repeat the transaction, because the economy is changed, because we stand face to face with the facts that were then typified, because Jesus says as much when he declares, that he shall drink no more of *this* fruit of the vine, but will drink it in a *new* style in his Father's kingdom.

On turning to Mark, we perceive that we are in contact with a narrative identical with that of Matthew, the only difference consisting in slight circumstances of language. It is made as plain here as in the former recital, that it was the passover which was eaten; the declaration is also distinctly given out here, that there is to be no more work of this kind in all coming time.

Luke also may be discussed with equal brevity. The only peculiarity that we can discover, is a minute dissimilarity in terms; thus, "For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." And again, "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." And again, "This do in remembrance of me." These are the most salient points of difference, but they are not of such a nature as to demand that we should dwell on them. Some perhaps might think that the injunction, "*this do*," was a formidable obstacle in the way of our view. To such we reply, that we in no degree deny that each of the narratives of this transaction requires that we should *do something* in consequence, but that each of them explains itself, and states that it is something *new* that is to be done, whereas the formula that has been observed hitherto, if it deserves to be called a fact,

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as an old affair, and partakes in the character of the first dispensation. We gladly accept the statement that an *act* is required of us ; but we answer, that according to the terms of the case, it is to be an act in harmony with our present economy, and therefore a spiritual act : the thing that has hitherto occupied attention being only a ritual non-entity. So far from allowing the imputation that it is our object to abrogate the command *this do*, we roundly reply, that we are attempting to bring it forward into a prominence that it never before occupied. We seek not to abolish, but to magnify. Our endeavour is to set men upon the momentous enquiry, what is the great *fact* that Jesus symbolised on the occasion of the passover : what is that *doctrine* that hitherto has lain buried under a gratuitous and pernicious rite ; what are the ideas that it would inculcate, what is the line of conduct to which it would conduct ? To seek to add to the thought and practice of the churches, is not the method of one who is hostile to the truth.

John's narrative is different from that of the other three. It omits the circumstances upon which they chiefly dwell. It brings forward a particular which they do not mention. It makes the leading feature of the occasion to be, the washing the feet of the disciples. As far as any conclusion is to be derived from the recital, it is quite in favour of our argument. John the most doctrinal of the four does not speak of the distributing of bread and wine, but he relates in long detail, a fact that probably appeared to him of similar complection. If the ceremony which we call the communion be of the importance that is ascribed to it, would John in speaking of the Passover have made no reference to it ? But if agreeably to our view, the act was a mere symbol, how suitable that John in recounting the scene should describe another figurative action, but

whose philosophy was the same! If as the churches believe, the Eucharist is an evangelical and therefore a doctrinal matter, how strange that John in relating every thing else that occurred at the Passover, should omit the most important part of the transaction! But if, as we maintain, the act which Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate, was only typical, how very natural that John who of the four invariably regards most the philosophy of things, should impart a cognate idea by a different symbol! So considered, the three first may be interpreted as declaring by the medium of bread and wine, that a sacrifice for sin must be offered before the New Testament could begin; whilst the fourth by the figure of water and washing of feet exhibits the parallel thought, that the death of the son would bring in the dispensation of the spirit. We are in the habit of saying indifferently of the New Testament, that it was ushered in by the death of the Son of God, or by the descent of the Holy Ghost. We consider that we designate the event aright, when we use the one or the other definition. Now this is just the thought that is conveyed by these types. Three evangelists agree in stating, that Jesus informed men whilst Judaism still existed, that a new era was about to appear; that in apprising them of this, he used the mode of teaching that was proper and essential to the Old Testament; and that the particular symbols which he employed, were bread and wine. The fourth, who throughout his gospel discourses much concerning the Spirit, relates how that on the same occasion the Saviour of men took a basin and a towel, thereby informing his church of that most characteristic feature of the new economy, the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The statements put together give us "the water and the blood." The three first direct our attention to the blood, the fourth points it to

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the water. Before we can legitimately use these symbols, we must go back into Judaism ; before we can employ the bread and wine, we must acknowledge the incumbency of the basin and the towel. We must make them both symbolic, or both moral.

We now come to the passage in the eleventh chapter of the first epistle to the Church of Corinth. Taking it for granted, that the churches are aware of the meaning that is attached to it at present, we shall without preamble proceed to advance specific reasons, why that meaning should be considered false and injurious.

1st. The passage opens with the statement that there were *divisions* or *schisms* among them, which idea is enlarged on in the subsequent verse, in which it is said, that it was requisite that there should be *heresies* among them, in order "that they which are approved, may be made manifest among you." This position, which is the preface to what follows, directly coincides with the view which we advance, whilst it seems to us to contradict the common opinion to the face. If Paul brought a *doctrinal* charge against this church, the preamble is in keeping with the general subject ; but if he accused them of eating and drinking to excess, the ordinary meaning attached to his words, how could such doings be termed *heretical and schismatic*? The imputation lay against the Corinthians rightfully enough that they were brutal, if their fault was of the kind that it is generally supposed to be, but the terms divisions and heresies appear strangely unsuited to it. The sin generally attributed to them, if the matter in question, entitled them to be placed in the category of *savages*, it gave them no claim to be put on the footing of *schismatics*. Not to speak of the glaring improbability that a church which Paul had planted, should be living in this state of mere animal existence, allowing

this to pass, we cannot by any effort imagine that the Apostle could take such a distorted view of their fault.—He might have called them *hogs*, but he could not with sanity name them *heretics*. Those who understand the force of an argument based upon the *context*, who are in the habit of admitting that it is of every degree of weight in order to determine the meaning of any passage; those who are aware that the sense of Scripture advances by right lines, and who are accustomed to apply this principle with sure and wholesome results, will not despise our remark. Paul commences a course of reasoning with these words, “for first of all;” he proceeds to say, that he has heard that there are *divisions* among them—he follows this up with the general remark that *heresies* are in the nature of things, that they are to be counted on, that they are designed to serve a purpose, which is to try the faith of men, and to elicit truth. In the very next verse after this momentous preamble, we suppose him to enter upon a topic in which schism and heresy can scarcely be imagined to find a place; a matter of eating and drinking. Is the sequel worthy of the preface; do the two thoughts cohere; is the usual principle of the context followed out here; is the reasoning consecutive, or is there not rather a leap from one subject to another that in any other department we would term extravagant? The apostle in one verse addresses his converts solemnly anent schisms and heresies that prevailed among them, in the next he slides into a censure in regard to their mode of feeding! If the present interpretation is to stand, we are forced to spring over a gap, to consent to the marriage of two ideas the most dissimilar—and by so doing, to authorise a style of hermeneutics that leads sceptics to say of Scripture, it may be *theology*, but it is not *sense*.

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metaphor in this case; if he is to be regarded as employing the actions of eating and drinking in that *mystical* manner in which they are often taken in other Scriptures. The preface and sequel would fall into beautiful harmony. He would then be viewed as setting out with a statement to the effect, that schisms prevailed in the Church, and he would be considered to prosecute the thought by shewing how the evil tendency displayed itself, in the way that the Corinthians partook of *spiritual* food. Thus, he would be moral throughout, instead of being moral in his preamble and carnal in the sequel. Thus also, the passage would be seen to be homogeneous throughout, instead of being discordant in a degree that staggers any one who tries it by the rules of ordinary criticism.

Those who think that to extract such a sense is to strain the meaning of language, should bear in mind that this is not to enter upon a new territory, but to employ *a standing metaphor* in an usual manner. The cases in which *the taking of food* is adopted as an illustration of mental processes are frequent, even within the compass of the Epistles. Another circumstance also deserves notice, as making the improbability less; we have Scriptural authority to lead us to anticipate dark sayings in the writings of this particular Apostle; "Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you: As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction." With such an admonition to guide us, it should not seem impossible that there may lurk in this passage, and in the other writings of Paul, thoughts whose apparent meaning is very different from the real. The prelude surely justifies us in

expecting that what follows should bear some relation to schisms and heresies. If the sense that we at present derive from the passage does not coincide with the preamble, there is in that fact much cause to question its correctness. If a meaning can be attached to it that fits in with the preface, that harmonises with the character of the whole, that falls in with all Scripture, and that adds to the capital of the Church an idea that is at once important and canonical, this ought not to be rejected before it is canvassed. The time will come when this new thought will be esteemed much more valuable than the old degrading rite, and when the one will explode the other. In the mean time we conclude, that the commencement of this passage promises something very different from what we have been in the habit of gathering from the remainder. This should be enough to make us pause and put the question to ourselves—may we not have erred hitherto in our views of this Scripture? A case of schism and heresy is removed by so wide an interval from matters connected with eating and drinking, as to make men hesitate who at all believe in the coherence and harmony of revelation, and to induce them to enquire whether a sense cannot be found at once agreeable to truth, and in accordance with this particular passage.

2. The connection between the preface and the next statement fortifies our view—"When ye come together **THEREFORE**, into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper." Why *therefore*? Once more, why *therefore*? What relation is there between the premises and conclusion in the present interpretation of the passage? The argument as now understood, runs thus—there are schisms among you, *therefore* when ye come together into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper. But what bond of connection is there between the two thoughts?

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The fact of their being schismatic, could not have the effect to make *a rite not a rite*. But if on the contrary to eat the Lord's Supper be a *mental* act, if in its very nature it implies that those who participate in it should be of one mind, then for men to be in a state of *disunion*, is not to do that act. On this supposition, the reasoning would stand thus—you are divided in opinion and feeling, *therefore* when you assemble you are not one body and one loaf; or in other words you do not eat the Lord's Supper, for that *banquet of the soul* consists in Christian sympathy among the guests. On this construction the two clauses fit in, as thoroughly as can be conceived.—But tried by the present interpretation, to our mind no two ideas could be less consecutive. The one charges the members of a church with schism—the other alledges as a consequence of this, that a rite ceased to be a rite.—The term *therefore*, produces a logical connection between the two sentences, making them to stand to each other in a relation of cause and effect. The first proposition accuses the Corinthians of being schismatical; the second ought to contain that which is a natural and a necessary consequence of the first, for they are linked by a *therefore*. But it is *not* an essential result of schism, that a rite should cease to be a rite. The elements that compose a rite, are a time, a place, a method. Sentiment has nothing to do with it. It is made up of externals. If the Lord's Supper be a ceremony, it existed not the less that the Corinthians were rent by faction. If they accorded to it the prescribed outward peculiarities, they were in order and rule. If the charge against them have reference to doctrine, these difficulties vanish. The two statements then stand in logical sequence. Each has a definite meaning, and the word *therefore* unites them with the greatest propriety. The thought will then run thus: you

are torn by schisms, therefore when you come together into one place you do not eat a Lord's Supper, because where strife and rivalry prevail, the essential elements of that spiritual banquet are wanting. Those who believe that every word of scripture dropped from the pen of the Spirit, and that by consequence every word must be in conformity with sound reasoning, will perceive the difficulty that there is in reconciling these two sentences with the old view, and will be forced to suspect that there may be something in that interpretation which we advocate.

3rd. If the sins brought against the Corinthians were gluttony and drunkenness, we cannot reconcile the following expressions with common sense: "What shall I say to you, shall I praise you in this?" There was no room for this query in the case supposed. The persons addressed knew the truth, and if they did they could entertain no doubt as to the opinion which their spiritual father would have in regard to their brutality. He who wrote to them understood the principles and practice of that gospel which he preached, and therefore could not have allowed himself to put such a question as that which we have quoted. But if the imputation against the church was something of *a more subtle kind*, if it had respect to *doctrinal* points, if it was to the effect that in religion they did not "tarry one for another," that the strong did not bear the burdens of the weak, there was far more room for the dilemma put by Paul. His converts might reasonably be conceived to be ignorant how far they had erred if the latter supposition be accepted; they had no ground for doubting if the libel against them was roystering intemperance.

4th. The expression "not discerning the Lord's body," appears to us to favour that view which we attempt to bring out. The charge advanced against the Corinthians

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was not that they were *unbelievers*, but as the church is wont to affirm, it was that they turned what ought to have been a decent rite, into a scene of excess. Had they been accused of being aliens to the faith, it might be practicable then to reconcile this clause with their state of mind. It might in that case be understood to mean, that they had not a perception of spiritual truths. But the charge being this, that *christians though they were*, they violated the propriety of a rite, we cannot attach any sense to the clause unless upon some notion that would imply the truth of the abominable figment transubstantiation. But if as we maintain, the charge brought against the church was, that there was a lack of sympathy among the members, the solution becomes simple. If the fault was, that each lived too exclusively for himself, and had not due regard for the wants of the fraternity, the language of the Apostle is susceptible of this natural explanation. So to eat is to bring condemnation on one's self, is to hoard up the manna till it stinks, is to forget the unity of the spirit, is to exhibit selfishness in religion, is to cease from being a steward of the mysteries of God, is in a word not to discern that truth which the Saviour expressed, in breaking bread and distributing wine.

5th. The sentence that perhaps more than any other condemns the present view, is that which follows: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." We know of nothing grosser in biblical criticism than the attempt to make these words coincide with a *literal* reading. A church consisting of real christians turns a sacred feast into a revel. But that is not all. The result of the excess was such, that whilst many among them became weak and sickly, there were many *actually asleep when Paul wrote to them!* The opiate must have been powerful, since the effect lasted whilst the

news was brought from Corinth to Philippi, and whilst the answer was carried back again to Corinth! Does not the extravagance of this construction stare upon us from under the letter? Do we not feel compelled to own that the thought must be *mythical*, from the impossibility that there is of finding sense in the literal aspect? Try it then by the other criterion. The apostle censures the church because its members were not Catholic in their feelings, lived to themselves, did not communicate, did not evince due regard for the spiritual welfare of the fraternity. He warns them that in so eating the bread of life, they drew condemnation on themselves. He sets before them that so to demean themselves, is not to have an eye to the Lord's body. He refers it to their selfish use of divine things, that the judgments of God had come down upon the community, that the intercourse with heaven was suspended, that many among them were weak and sickly, that many slept. Is there any difficulty *now* in accommodating the several propositions with each other and with sound sense? It will not be disputed by those who know the scriptures, that the terms weak, sickly, and asleep, are frequently employed in that *moral* sense which we ascribe to them in this instance. If they are so used in one case, they may be so in another. Those too, who are acquainted with the philosophy of religion as described in the bible, will admit the truth of the following positions: that believers are enjoined to impart of their spiritual things, that in many instances the blessedness of the man is detailed who distributes, who lends, who gives to the poor, that numerous promises relate the rewards which shall belong to those who so act, that many passages expressly specify that he who so lives, shall enrich and not impoverish himself by that which he bestows. On the other hand, there are scriptures that recount the evil re-

sults of the way to covetousness to self. It is not to share in this case, so we are not in notion. Corinthian ful steward own glory munity, th many of th We adduc agreeable mony with more whole rite abused as a retribu 6th. The set in order the clauses spiritual, it was ordering venteen ve should have be added b of importan thing else t ter is not c gorge and i topic is so g of it must b face to face ters can th

sults of the opposite line of conduct, showing that the way to continue poor in knowledge and in grace, is to live to self. But if this idea be at once orthodox and usual, it is not to speak extravagantly to say, that it is the thought in this case. We *may* be wrong in this allegation, but if so we are not guilty of bringing forward an unscriptural notion. Our argument then is to this purpose, that the Corinthians although christians, had not behaved as faithful stewards, that each had too much of a desire for his own glory to feel a due regard for the welfare of the community, that the consequence of their selfishness was, that many of them were weak and sickly and that many slept. We adduce this version without hesitation as far more agreeable to the particular scripture, much more in harmony with the general tenor of the gospel, and much more wholesome in its results, than the old opinion of a rite abused, and leaving bodily sickness and bodily sleep as a retribution with the offender.

6th. The concluding sentence, "And the rest will I set in order when I come," betrays the same character as the clauses on which we have commented. It favours a spiritual, it is hostile to a superficial meaning. If Paul was ordering the procedure of a rite, it is strange that seventeen verses should not have sufficed him, and that he should have found it requisite to leave something still to be added by word of mouth. This is to attach an amount of importance to a thing ceremonial, that agrees with nothing else that we see in the Epistles. The half of a chapter is not enough to tell a Church that they should not gorge and intoxicate themselves at a sacred festival! The topic is so grand and profound, that the full consideration of it must be deferred until he could converse with them face to face! Paul who usually even in the deepest matters can throw his thoughts into small compass, cannot

do so when he comes to treat of an affair that common sense would put down to the butler's department! Let us try the other theory. The Apostle does not speak of refectory and vintner work. His writing has regard to lofty doctrines. He veils great questions beneath an extended metaphor. Bodily acts here stand for transactions of the soul. He censures the Christians of a Church because that in feeding themselves, they do not evince due regard that others are fed. He shews such conduct to be the cause of the leanness and torpor with which they are afflicted. But this is a very metaphysical topic. It is in some of its branches subtle to a degree. How a man by attending too exclusively to self should bring down weakness on his nature; how by looking at the gospel with an intellectual eye he should mar its sanctifying power: how a man can believe, and at the same time endeavour to make religious matters subservient to his own eclat; what are the links of connection between such behaviour and the sterility that surely supervenes;—why to distribute to others should be the means of nourishing the soul of him who does so. These points are not exactly mysterious, but they are intricate, they are fine, they involve many other questions; it is most agreeable to reason that the Apostle having touched on them, and having established the leading positions, should reserve further details until he visited the Church.

We have adduced *six* instances wherein the passage appears to demand a spiritual sense. In these cases the deeper thought shines through the veil, in these examples we find evident chinks that betray the presence of a secret recess. These cases conjoined with others in the course of this chapter, and connected with the general considerations that we have derived from other quarters, cause us to entertain no doubt that the passage has been

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alsely interpreted hitherto, and lead us to the conclusion that its real meaning is either that which we have stated, or one standing to it in the closest proximity.

7th. The view which we advocate seems to grow necessarily out of the preceding context, whereof schisms are the main thought; it appears likewise to coincide with what *succeeds*. The chapter that immediately follows, begins thus, "*Now* concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." Supposing that in the eleventh chapter he has been pursuing the line of argument for which we contend, the twelfth sets out in a most appropriate manner. It gives forth this thought,—although I Paul have been occupied in condemning the Church of Gorinth for caring only for gifts and neglecting charity, *now* or yet, I beg to assure you that gifts are by no means to be despised. The word *therefore* in our opinion links the passage on with the previous reasoning, the word *now* connects it intimately with that which comes after. Surely it is a point in favour of a reading, that it fits in at once with what goes before and with what succeeds.

8th. There are parallel scriptures that seem to sanction our interpretation of this remarkable passage. Thus it is said of some—"spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings *while they feast with you*." Most spiritual men would grant that it is not necessary to suppose, that an actual feast is here intended. They would be willing to own, that the sense of the clause is simply, that the characters referred to indulge in their own foolish imaginations, all the while that they live in apparent fellowship with Christian churches. But if this be the thought of one sentence, why may it not in another example run through several? If a short metaphor is allowable, why not one that is long? All that we contend

for is, that an idea pervades seventeen verses similar to that, which in the instance above quoted, forms the subject of one. In the writings of profane authors it is usual to find a metaphor sometimes dashed off in a line or a word, sometimes studiously drawn out into long and minute detail. What we maintain in this argument is merely, that the sentence in Peter is the metaphor alluded to, and that the paragraph in Paul is the metaphor long drawn out.—The supposition is not in itself opposed to what we commonly find in general literature. It receives confirmation from another scripture. Jude apparently speaking of the like class, uses this language, "These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." The resemblance between this and the narrative of Paul, is very striking. Here are feasts not of carnal elements but of charity, here are those who feast at them, and are spots in them, because they feed themselves without fear. Is it possible to understand Jude as speaking in a spiritual sense? Few will deny that it is. But if this be conceded, the difference between him and Paul is only one of *length*. Jude expresses the thought in half a verse, Paul pursues it through half a chapter. Are we to say that Jude is spiritual because he is brief, and that Paul is ritual because he is ample? It is surely possible to put the same thought into small or into large compass. It does not cease to be the same idea because in one place it is dwelt upon, and in another only glanced at. We can conceive no wiser interpretation than to regard Jude as explaining Paul, and to look upon each as expressing a similar thought. Like conclusions may be obtained from the tenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, although the Church in general would deny the fact. Here "the cup of blessing," is defined to be "the communion of the blood of

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Christ," the bread is described as "the communion of the body of Christ." The usual mode of rendering these expressions is to say, that it is requisite to eat bread literally in order to partake in the body of Christ, and to drink wine actually in order to realise the blood of Christ. How much more reasonable and scientific to regard this as a case, wherein the shadow and the substance are brought into the same paragraph, with a view to render the thought more emphatic! In that case the Apostle might be considered to imply this much. I remind you by the bread and the cup which the Saviour employed in the era of figures, that we who are his followers lay claim to nothing less than a participation in the nature of the Lord Jesus. It is quite in the style of the New Testament to bring symbol and doctrine into apposition, and to speak of a subject with reference to both. This happens so very often, that we do not adduce examples, but refer ourselves over to the experience of those conversant with Scripture.

What as much as any other argument confirms us in our opinion of this passage, is the fact that we know from many other parts of the two epistles, *that the Church really was in the posture which we suppose it to portray.* There is no fact better ascertained in regard to the Corinthians than this, that they were puffed up, that graces seemed to them less valuable than gifts, and that because of this, they were torn by jealousy and disunion. The following passages as much as any other exhibit this fact. "How is it then brethren when ye come together every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation? Let all things be done unto edifying." Again, "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the

prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all churches of the saints. Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask *their* husbands at home; for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. What? came the word of God out from you, or came it unto you only? If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently, and in order." Indeed the whole chapter from which these portions are extracted is to the same effect; and without difficulty many other passages might be adduced from the two epistles, all coinciding in this, that vain-glorying had entered the Church, introducing schism, weakness, and lethargy. But it is a strong argument in favour of the meaning for which we contend, to say, that it is in harmony not merely with the general doctrines of Scripture, but with *the known condition* of the Church in Corinth. Indeed the scriptures that we have last quoted, appear to us to place the question beyond dispute, for they go over the same ground, and bring up charges of a parallel nature. Instead of insisting more at length on the reasonableness of our view, we shall proceed to shew exactly what it is, and this we shall do not by a disquisition, but by a *paraphrase* of the passage.

[Now in reference to the topic that I am handling, I do not praise you that you make your public assemblies instruments of evil instead of good. For first of all, when ye come together in the congregation, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it. For such

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things are in the line of what is to be expected ; it must needs be that offences will come, and heresies serve this purpose, that they bring out to view the steadfastness of those who are in earnest. Being then in this state of disunion, when ye come together it is not a Lord's Supper that you exhibit. A body rent by factions, cannot correspond with a symbol that is expressive of harmony.—Your mode of feeding on the worn does not agree with the idea that Christ by a ceremony laid before his disciples, for you snatch and scramble, and one gets too much and another too little. Is such conduct necessary? If there are those among you who feel annoyed at the tardy pace of the mind of the community, can these not indulge in swift-coming fancies within the house of their own soul ; if they consider the meal that suits the congregation too meagre for their appetite, can they not be content to fare sumptuously in private, and in pleasant fellowship with their own thoughts? Are these anxious by their public displays, to cover with confusion persons less erudite and intellectual than themselves? What shall I say to you for these things? Do you expect me to praise you? Such behaviour does not deserve encomium. That I may recall you to a sense of duty, I bring up a symbol, I stir up your minds by way of remembrance, I lay before you the picture of what should be the demeanour of Christians, by recapitulating to you that ceremonial feast which Jesus observed before he suffered. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread : and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat ; this is my body, which is broken for you : this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood ; this do ye.

as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. By this reference to the symbol, you will see sentence passed upon your conduct. This type shews us the example of a master, who handed the bread and the cup to his followers, and as he instructed them in humility and love by washing of feet, so he taught them sympathy and concern one for another, in the distributing of bread and wine. Wherefore with the symbol before me, I conclude, that whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, selfishly, to gratify mere natural propensity, shall be considered to act in a guilty manner towards that divine word, which Christ described as his body and blood. In order that a man may avoid such high criminality, let him examine himself, and having ascertained what his motives are, let him then eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that deals with divine things on other terms than these, who feeds himself and has no eye to the flock, eats and drinks unworthily; instead of benefitting he draws down condemnation upon himself, because engrossed with self, he does not estimate his conduct with a reference to the Lord's body, which is the elect people. It is because of such spiritual misdemeanour that many are weak and sickly among you, and that many sleep. For such dispensations you have no cause to blame the Most High, the fault is your own, for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. This being the case, we may conclude that when affliction comes down upon us, we are chastened by the Lord, with the benevolent intention that we should not be condemned with the world. Having such signal tokens before you to tell you of your misconduct, take warning brethren, and let your congregational doings in regard to religion proceed on the principle that you

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should advance abreast. And if there be among you minds of an eager and rapid nature, let such indulge their speculations in private, let them husband their ideas until others are prepared to receive them. By so acting, there will be union instead of discord in your assemblies. But as this question is intricate, I reserve its further consideration until I see you face to face.]

Some will object to this interpretation of the passage, that according to their belief the Corinthians *did* observe a feast, and did eat and drink to excess, as we have been in the habit of supposing. To such we reply, that a doctrine or supposition has always been able to *breed a tradition*. Nothing is more easily got up, than what is called a historical fact. Men are naturally false, and they never lie with greater zest and obstinacy, than when their object is to maintain any dogma connected with their creed. Supposing the church to have commenced the ceremony called the Eucharist in the third, fourth, or fifth century, it was a simple matter for it in the first place to attach to this chapter the sense that suits the rite, and then it was quite as easy for it to shape the history of the past to fit the view. It reasoned thus : this passage *seems to* represent the Corinthians as guilty of excess at certain church banquets held among them, therefore we conclude that such was a fact in history. Such reasoning was quite in keeping with the times, and the men for whom the figment was devised, were in general quite unable to shew its fallacy. Any one who has examined the thousand and one fables that the Jewish Rabbis have reared on the basis of the Old Testament ; any one who is acquainted with the style in which rites and strange doctrines sprung up in the early ages of christianity, will suspend his opinion before he condemns us. Such men will sympathize with us when we say, that in every age, and in every

ways been able to beget a tradition at pleasure. They will understand us when we say, that few things look more formidable than a tradition twelve or fifteen centuries old, but that in a great majority of instances it is found a thing impossible to trace it back to the time that it pretends to chronicle.

Others will raise the difficulty, that if our interpretation of this chapter be allowed to pass, a plea will thereby be afforded for regarding other passages in the New Testament, as mystical in their texture. We admit the objection. It is valid. But what then? Whilst it is so, we do not allow that it proves any thing against our view. It holds that the principle employed by us in this instance, may be carried further; but in maintaining this it does not shew that to extend it will necessarily be pernicious. If in the present case, a good doctrine has been procured in exchange for a most destructive rite, the rule *might* be employed in other examples without doing harm. But we do not stay to reason out this question; it will be time enough to own the evil, when we see a definite case adduced. Our arguments have been to this effect, that the passages in the four evangelists do not justify a ceremony, because they refer to an era that was typical in all its extent—because they represent the disciples in a position different from that in which Christians have been, since the death of Christ and the coming of the Spirit—because they resemble other portions of the gospels from which we extract no rite, and because they contain within themselves the promise, that when the kingdom of heaven should be set up, Christ would drink the wine *new* with his people, that is to say spiritually and without a symbol. Our general conclusion is, that the injunction to do this in remembrance of Christ gives out the following thoughts—distribute the bread of life, pour forth the blood of the

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New Testament, tarry one for another, bear ye one another's burdens, feed my sheep, feed my lambs. Those who have been once smitten with the taste for sacraments will in general think such sentiments a poor exchange for a high festival—those whose minds are yet to form, will probably in many cases pronounce that the *new wine* is better.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

“*And he said, ye have taken away my Gods, which I MADE, and the priest, and ye are gone away; and what have I more? And what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee?*”—JUDG. XVIII. 24.

The object of the foregoing chapters has been to attempt to take away the Gods that men have made. Similar things have been done before. Holy Writ apprises us how that Hezekiah took the brazen serpent which the people worshipped, and breaking it, called it *Nehushtan*, that is a piece of brass. The Church has not so many of these idols as it had before the Reformation. It considers that it has gained by such losses in time past—to a moral certainty it will think so again. The general proposition out of which our remarks spring, is to this effect, that the dispensation of the New Testament is *without a rite*. The first covenant verily had ordinances of divine service, and holy furniture. Our main position is that the second covenant or economy, is devoid of all such upholstery. Those have not understood us who shall assert, that our objections to rites are *sentimental*. Our argument is not, we do not like them, because we do not

like them. This mode of logic is the prerogative of weak men, and juggling priests. We wish to eschew it. We pretend to found our objection on the basis, that the holy Spirit in the word declares ordinances to be foreign to the Gospel, and so pernicious, that even *one* of them is enough to contaminate the whole system. We do not wish to mince terms. Our sober opinion of the Church as it is, is not merely that it is weakened by the legal elements which it contains, but that with rare exceptions it is damned by them. To remove the rites at this moment, would be to strip ninety nine men of *all* their religion, and to leave the hundredth with a mere rag to cover him.

In discussing these subjects, we have briefly adverted to the fact that the doctrine of *two economies*, one symbolic, the other spiritual, lies at the foundation of all the discoveries that are yet to be made in revealed religion.—Though we have said little upon it we consider the topic the broadest and most important of those that we have handled.

As an inference from it, we have sought to prove that the *Decalogue* is not as has been hitherto supposed, Catholic in its first intention, but that each one of its articles is susceptible of a higher meaning, and that it must receive this before it can rank with the doctrines of salvation. In addition to the arguments that we have adduced, the following passage deserves insertion—"Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward. Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God, who also hath made us able minis-

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ters of the New Testament; not of the letter but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which (glory) was to be done away, how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory.—For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the Children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished.” The like idea is also contained in the following verses in the first Epistle of John:—“Brethren I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” It looks very evident that we have in this passage the two aspects of the law on which we have insisted, the literal or old, the spiritual or new.

As a corollary from the positions laid down in discussing the decalogue, we have touched on the *Sabbath*, seeking to shew that the process of translation which is applied to symbols in general, adapted to this case, brings out a doctrine instead of a day.

We have pursued the same method in reference to *the Sabbath*, and have attempted to prove that the an-

titype of this figure is not a building, but is the spiritual Church.

We have brought up the subject of the *Levitical priesthood*, making it our endeavour to exhibit the truth, that its co-relative is not an order of clergy, but that whole people which the work of redemption makes kings and priests unto God.

We have analysed the matter of *psalmody*, and amongst other points have tried to establish the position, that thereby hangs a valuable set of ideas, which are lost sight of in the merely literal and ritual view that has been taken of the subject.

As a preliminary to our remarks on baptism, we have erected the distinction between *the acts and the writings* of the contributors to the canon, and have shewn that while it has been but imperfectly applied in the case of the worthies of the Old Testament, it has not been applied in any degree to the twelve Apostles.

We have discussed *Baptism* with the intent to shew, that the Church has been guilty of retaining the symbol after the antitype has come, and very generally has committed the heinous offence of predicating concerning the sign, the virtue that belongs to the divine agent whom it denotes.

As a derivation from the foregoing, we have commented upon the matter of *agency*, shewing that if the commission to christians is to be understood as an injunction to them to go forth and baptize with the spirit, there is in this fact a call for different views and men from those that the churches have yet seen.

We have touched upon the *Eucharist*, and have striven to shew that Christ did not command his followers to remember him in a *ceremony*, but in a *fact*, in a doctrine, in a line of holy practice.

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The combined effect of these different propositions is, that the gospel has no day, or place, or formal order, or enjoined rites. In bringing out these principles, we have not availed ourselves of some subsidiary arguments that have presented themselves to our mind. Thus we have not attempted to borrow light from *prophecy*, because that subject is so little understood, that it seems doubtful how far it would be right to adduce its dark sayings, in vindication of our new opinions. We have not dwelt upon the description in the Apocalypse, of the second beast, which had "two horns like a lamb," and which "spoke as a dragon." We have not taken a stand upon the account of the holy city, where it is said, "and I saw no temple therein." We have avoided referring to many similar notices that occur in the prophets. And yet the suspicion on our mind is, that the rites which we have sought to translate into doctrines, are the body and limbs of this second beast. Our feelings prompt us to believe, that the tendency of our remarks will be to break up his empire. There ought to be enough of evidence for what is really true, without dragging in what would be named questionable proof. Our positions if sound, do not pull down—they build up; they do not diminish, but on the contrary they magnify. There is thought and religion in doctrines, there is none in rites. We are as far as may be from thinking, that these opinions are of primary consequence *in themselves*. Their chief value consists in this, that they *clear the decks for action*. Their principal importance lies, in the results to which they lead. It is certainly no trivial matter that men should be placed in circumstances in which they will be less likely than at present, to take the shadow for the substance. To be delivered from the prejudice that causes them to assign holiness to days, places, attitudes, and mere ecclesiastics, is no small

benefit. But the main body of the advantage stands connected with the effects to which this will conduct. When the fallacy is removed, will they not be compelled to think more justly? If these externals have the influence at present to entrap all the sons of men, when they are shown to be pure figments, will not much mind be disengaged by this very fact? Those who really lay hold on eternal life, will be able then to give all their strength to things of value; and how much wise speculation and virtuous action may spring out of this? Those who after all do not receive the truth, will at least be more mental in their irreligion; the lies by which they will be taken, will contain more intellect than the *bo peep* follies that have amused them hitherto. The earth will cease to swarm with such dull bipeds as it now contains. It is something to elevate the mind of the human race, if that elevation should afford the slightest prospect of bringing it nearer to heaven. Under the system which we contemplate, saints might rise to any conceivable height of knowledge and holiness, and sinners could hardly continue to be such enthralled, ignorant and stupid dupes as we now find them. There remains also this most pleasing anticipation; in the effulgent era which we suppose to come in, will it be practicable for so large a portion of humanity to withhold their faith from truths that confront them so very directly? In making the plan of salvation to stand forth without an envelope, do we not increase the probability that it will be appreciated and embraced?

The progress of these opinions will probably not be rapid. They will have small *retrospective* influence. Few of those who have arrived at ripe years, will deem them sound or safe. Their chief power will be upon those who are in a transition state, and upon generations to come.

That the volume might be of moderate dimensions, we

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have excluded several topics which we had designed to insert, as for instance, Reflections on Prophecy, on the Morality of Scripture, on the Scientific Notices scattered through the bible, on the light that Revelation sheds upon Metaphysics, and the structure of Human Nature in general, &c. &c. &c. Perhaps the opportunity may be afforded us to discuss those and other cognate questions in some future treatise.

THE END.